

MH07D7066



**National Latino Children's Institute**



**Creating a healthy wave**

## **Community Coordinator's Handbook**

2000-2001  
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MH07D7066

**Latino Children's Agenda in Action**

✓ This publication was developed with a grant from the Office of Minority Health,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Cooperative agreement  
US2MP98010, OMH-NLCI-1-99-2.

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### **Mission Statement**

The National Latino Children's Institute is a nonprofit organization that creates a voice for Latino children and youth. Its mission is to promote and implement the National Latino Children's Agenda, a comprehensive statement of principles for the complete and healthy development of young Latinos. NLCI carries out its mission by working with the La Promesa Programs and other local and national partners to create the promise of a bright future for young Latinos.



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# **Onda Sana**

## **Creating a healthy wave**

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### **Acknowledgments**

*Onda Sana* is a program developed by the National Latino Children's Institute that focuses on educating young Latinos about high-risk behaviors and healthy choices. This effort was funded by the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Special thanks to the following staff of the Office of Minority Health: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Minority Health Nathan Stinson Jr., M.D., M.P.H.; Project Officer Joyce Heinonen; and Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Minority Health Guadalupe Pacheco, M.S.W.

We also gratefully thank Sandy Hysom, health education teaching specialist, Wichita Public School System, Wichita, Kansas, who shared her knowledge and gave us her friendship; and to Jamie Morales, for sharing her stories and her life with us. Thank you also to María Gomez-Murphy for her help in visualizing this program. Finally, thanks to Cristina Helmerichs, our translator, who always helps us with the right words.

### **Pilot teams**

NLCI's programs are developed with the advice of over 100 exemplary programs selected as winners of the La Promesa de un Futuro Brillante awards. Chosen for their exemplary work with Latino children and youth, these organizations have identified the best strategies for removing barriers and incorporating culture into NLCI's programs. We are grateful to the following people and organizations, which were instrumental in the initial pilot tests, for their contributions in developing *Onda Sana*.

Peter García, formerly of La Clínica de la Familia, Las Cruces, N.M.

Ricardo Mejia, Ensueños del Futuro, Family Services Center, Houston, Texas

David Nieves, Grand Street Settlement, New York, N.Y.

Ada Rodríguez, Bienvenidos Family Services, Los Angeles, Calif.

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# 1

## Una onda sana

*¿Ey, qué onda?*

*Nothin', man, whasup with you?*

*Pues nada, I was just going over to Mando's, wanna go?*

*Na, man, I promised my Jefita that I'd stop goin' over there. She knows they're doin' drugs all the time.*

Every day throughout the United States, teenagers wake up, get dressed and start their day. Some will go to school and excel at math while others will write exquisite prose in English class. A few can't wait to play a musical instrument and others will wake up listening to the radio. Some will go to work instead of school; some will "hang out in the hood." A lucky few will have their own car to get around, some will "bum a ride," others will ride the subway or school bus and some may walk or be dropped off by parents.

Each young person will make their way through the day in their own way. They will make many choices: which friends to sit with at lunch, who to invite to the party, whether to skip school or go to class, whether to study for the quiz or go to the game, to stay in school or get a job.

Every choice can change their lives.

Sometimes the decisions put youth at risk: riding in a car with a driver who has been drinking, getting involved with a violent gang, using drugs, having unprotected sex, riding a motorcycle without a helmet, riding in a car without wearing a seat belt.

Sometimes the risks are not created by teens. They may live in a violent home, the neighborhood may be environmentally dangerous or they may have to navigate busy intersections without crosswalks and stop signs. They may grow up without health insurance and a medical home.



### Who's at risk?

Some young people live with very few risks. Others grow up with danger every day, and among these are teenage Latinos. With the nation's highest poverty rate, many young Latinos start life already in jeopardy. Poverty is not the only indicator for the future, however, and every child can grow up healthy and happy, but the choices they make as



they are growing up can make a difference in what their future looks like.

*Onda Sana* helps young people take the future into their own hands. It helps them focus on the world they live in and on the choices they make.

By providing information and talking about things that most people find difficult to discuss, *Onda Sana* helps Latino youth make informed choices and develop strong communication with their families and friends.

By creating public education events and stirring up the community's interest in reducing risk, *Onda Sana* helps young Latinos overcome taboos and fears to create a healthy world for growing up.

## **Who's making good choices?**

Teens are more likely to make good choices when they have a strong identity, have dreams for their future and know what they want from life. They need to feel that they are loved and have someone to talk to when they have problems. They need to be connected to the community and have access to good information.

In many cities there are extraordinary community-based organizations that provide after-school activities and weekend programs for teens. These organizations provide tutoring,

hold dances and group activities and offer counseling when necessary. They hold job fairs, host libraries, sponsor team sports and have community centers where ballet folklórico classes are taught next door to Internet workstations staffed by college students. Frequently the parents of teens are the program volunteers.

When teens connect with these organizations, they feel special. They make new friends and have opportunities to develop their skills and talents. Even if home life or school is complex and difficult, teens who have a secure place to "hang out" are more likely to find help when they need it and make better choices than those who have no one to turn to. These teens are also more likely to help their friends make good choices.

This handbook provides the tools nonprofit organizations need to create a new wave of thinking and action among teens. It was developed by the National Latino Children's Institute with the support of eight outstanding community organizations from different regions of the country, representing the many cultural differences among Latinos. Selected for their excellence and commitment to young Latinos, the pilot sites were chosen from the winners of *La Promesa de un Futuro Brillante* award. These programs represent the best thinking about what works for young Latinos.





*Onda Sana* was tested in partnership with the following organizations:

- American Institute for Learning, Austin, Texas
- Aspira South Cultural Enrichment Program, Miami, Fla.
- Bienvenidos Family Services, Los Angeles, Calif.
- La Clínica de la Familia, Las Cruces, N.M.
- Ensueños del Futuro, Houston, Texas
- Grand Street Settlement, New York, N.Y.
- Nevada Hispanic Services, Reno, Nev.
- Teens and Tots Program, Oakland, Calif.

## **Latinos and HIV/AIDS**

Among the greatest risks faced by young Latinos today is HIV/AIDS.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, through June 2000, more than 137,575 Latinos in the United States were diagnosed with AIDS. While Latinos make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 20 percent of the total number of new U.S. AIDS cases reported in 1999 (9,021 of 46,400 cases).

The picture is equally sobering when we focus on Latino youth. Although Latino children make up only 15 percent of the population under age 13, they represent 24 percent of all pediatric AIDS cases. And although Latinos make up only about 14 percent of U.S. teenagers, they represent 20 percent of AIDS cases among teens. As of June 2000, approximately 11,000 Latino youth ages 24 and under had been reported with AIDS, according to the CDC.

What makes these statistics more alarming is the concern that Latinos might not be getting the message about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Although health experts recognize the importance of understanding and integrating Latino cultural values, attitudes and behaviors into prevention messages, there is a lack of information on the subject and few educational materials. Often, existing Spanish-language health education materials for providing outreach to Latinos are poorly written or don't

recognize and respond to the cultural values and beliefs.

### **Who's getting HIV/AIDS?**

There is much more information about AIDS available today than just 10 years ago, and yet it doesn't seem to be reaching youth.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, it is estimated that at least half of all new HIV infections occur in young people under the age of 25. Latinos represent 20 percent of all cases and 20 percent of all children infected.

In the United States, knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is low, even though teens exhibit greater knowledge than adults, according to a study conducted by the American Social Health Association. In one poll, only 12 percent of American teens and 4 percent of adults were aware that STDs infect as many as one-fifth of the people in the country, and 26 percent of adults and 42 percent of teens could not name an STD other than HIV/AIDS.

The CDC reports that, among women in the United States, Latinas represent 19 percent of cumulative AIDS cases among Hispanics, but they account for 22 percent of cases reported in 1999 alone. The AIDS incidence rate per 100,000 population (the number of new cases of a disease that occur during a specific time period) among Latinos in 1999 was 25.6, almost three times the rate for non-Hispanic whites (7.6) but lower than the rate for African Americans (66.0). The CDC also reports that HIV risk among Latinos varies depending on region, level of acculturation, lifestyle and birthplace. A high rate of HIV/AIDS exists among Latinos in the Northeast, and lower rates occur in the West and Southwest. For example, a higher incidence of HIV in the Northeast among Puerto Ricans may be related to higher use of injection drugs; Puerto Rican Latinos have the highest prevalence of drug use, in part due to the fact that most (70 percent) living in the United States reside in New York City, New Jersey and Chicago, where the availability of illegal drugs is high.

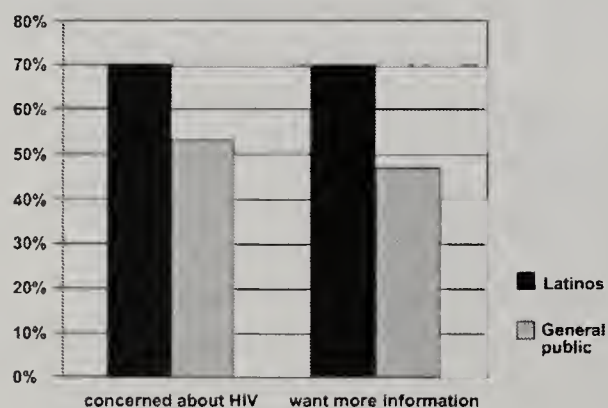


The disproportionate impact of AIDS on Latinos requires that closer attention be paid to their attitudes toward AIDS and the behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection.

### **De eso no se habla**

Latinos find it difficult to talk about sex and the behavioral risks associated with AIDS. The tradition of avoiding the discussion of “taboo topics” is frequently expressed in the Spanish phrase *De eso no se habla*, meaning “We don’t talk about that.”

This reluctance to discuss the taboo topics isn’t due to lack of caring, though; far from it. Discussing delicate topics, particularly HIV/AIDS, is a primary concern for Latinos. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation’s 1997 national study of Latino attitudes toward HIV/AIDS, when asked which single area they wanted information about, Latino parents’ first choices were discussing AIDS with children (40 percent) and finding information about where to go for help if they were exposed to HIV (17 percent). In addition, 70 percent of Latino parents were very concerned about their children getting HIV (compared to 52 percent of all parents), and 70 percent of Latino parents want more information on what to discuss with children about HIV and AIDS, compared with 46 percent of the general public.



Why are these topics, which are critical to the health and well-being of Latino youth and families, and which Latino parents care deeply about, so hard to discuss?

Many factors come into play. Cultural influences such as *machismo*, *fatalismo* and homophobia may make it difficult for many Latinos to discuss the risks involved in certain behaviors. *Machismo*, for example, may dictate that intercourse is one way to prove masculinity. Although this is not the real definition of *machismo*, it is one that many people believe. Women may not talk to men about sex, because it may suggest promiscuity. Latino gay men may never discuss their sexual preference with their families, feeling instead the sense of personal shame and low self-esteem resulting from the cultural perception that homosexuality is sinful.

Some cultural attitudes may result in a reluctance to have conversations about sexuality and other personal topics, yet the same cultural values can serve to open new doors to information about the risks of HIV infection. *Onda Sana* uses the best knowledge of what works with Latinos and employs these strategies in a cultural framework to help young Latinos get the information they need to make decisions that will set their future on course. The first step to preventing the spread of HIV among this group is to understand the dynamics of growing up as a young Latino in the United States.

### **Who are the young Latinos?<sup>1</sup>**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Latino population grew at a staggering rate of 58 percent between 1990 and 2000 and accounted for nearly 40 percent of the country’s population growth between 1990 and 2000. They now comprise nearly 13 percent, or 1 out of every 8 persons in the country. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that Latinos could account for 1 out of 4 residents in the United States by 2050. By 2100, Latinos could make up one-third of the total U.S. population.

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this section were adapted from *The Agenda in Action*, a 1999 report by the National Latino Children’s Institute.



The driving force behind the growing Latino population is its youth. Today, 36 percent of the Latino population is under age 18. The number of Latino children has increased faster than that of any other group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 16 percent in 2000. By 2020, it is projected that more than 1 in 5 children in the United States will be of Hispanic origin.

Yet data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that this group has the least access to resources and support services needed to grow up healthy and ready to take their place in society. Latino children are the most uninsured population group (27.1 percent of the uninsured) even

though they are especially likely to live in two-parent, working families. Indicators of well-being suggest that this also means they may not have a medical home and are less likely to be immunized. Young Latinos have the lowest high school completion rate (57 percent), according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and the second-highest poverty rate (30 percent in 1999) of any children's population group in the country, according to Child Stats' *America's Children 2001* report.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control indicates that young Latinos are also disproportionately represented in preventable causes of death, such as HIV infection, not wearing seat belts and being involved in car crashes. According to the CDC, through June 2000, more than 137,575 Latinos in the United States were diagnosed with AIDS. While Latinos make up less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 20 percent of the total number of new U.S. AIDS cases reported in 1999 (9,021 of 46,400 cases).



Latino children are part of a diverse cultural group that includes ancestry from the indigenous peoples of Mexico, Central and South America, Spanish land grant families, Cuba, Puerto Rico (U.S. citizens from the mainland and the island), Africans in the Caribbean, Asians and other countries of origin. Latinos have been in the United States as long as there have been people here, and others have

arrived as recently as today.

This explosive growth, fueled by both immigration and a younger population in its child-bearing years, will bring new opportunities and challenges for Latino children and youth. Already, corporations are paying attention to the buying power of this growing market, and politicians

are "working" the Latino vote.

The largest group of Latinos is of Mexican descent, numbering nearly 35.3 million (59 percent), and the second largest group is Puerto Rican (10 percent). In the 2000 U.S. Census, 3.5 percent of Latinos were Cubans; persons of other Hispanic origins such as Central and South America, Spain and the Caribbean represented another 17 percent of Latinos, up from 4 percent in 1990.

Each group of Latinos has come to the United States at different times and for different political and historical reasons. Some were living on land that the United States claimed. Others arrived recently as refugees from civil wars, and others came to work, recruited by U.S. companies needing to increase their workforce. Although many persons of Hispanic origin have immigrated to the United States, their children are typically citizens born here. Latinos are of every race, every religion and every blend of skin color, and they call themselves by many names. While the history is as



complex to adults as it is to their children, it describes a dynamic population that contributes significantly to the United States.

### **Where do Latinos live?**

In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 70 percent of the nation's Latinos resided in five states. Ironically, these are the same states that have the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS. California had the largest share of the nation's Hispanic population with 11 million Latinos, followed by Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois. California is home to one in three Latinos; Texas is home to one in five. Other concentrations of Latinos are found in New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado.

### **Poverty**

Latino poverty has been increasing since the 1980s, despite the fact that male Latinos are employed at a higher rate than any other group: 80.4 percent versus 68.1 percent for African Americans, and 74.3 percent for non-Hispanic whites. In many families, both parents work, and many children work before and after school to augment the family income. In spite of the family's efforts, the number of Latino children living in poverty—30 percent—is sobering.

In 1998, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 22.7 percent of all Latinos lived below the federal poverty level, compared to 23.4 percent of African Americans and 8 percent of non-Hispanic whites. This is especially tragic given that overall poverty rates for other groups have declined.

### **Language**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 32 million people over the age of five speak a language other than English in the home. Although most U.S. Latinos speak English (74 percent), Spanish continues to be the favored language in the home. The proximity of the U.S.-Mexico border, the interaction between Puerto Ricans living on the island and those on the mainland, and strong cultural traditions encourage Spanish use at home. Generally,

monolingual Spanish speakers are first- or second-generation immigrants or persons who live along the U.S.-Mexico border or in Puerto Rico.

Spanish-language radio and television are widely used forms of communication and entertainment. Market data reveals that 25 percent of Latinos listen to Spanish-language television, 25 percent listen to English stations and 50 percent switch back and forth. The recent growth of Hispanic magazines and newspapers further affirms the desire to maintain Spanish as the home language.

Spanish is the most widely used language in the western hemisphere and is the official language of most Central and South American countries.

### **Family structure and values**

Recognizing that one of the most important structures in the Latino community is the extended family and that Latinos draw strength from extended family members is the key to providing relevant services to Latinos. The extended family includes cousins, aunts, grandparents and siblings, and they rely heavily on each other for financial, moral and emotional support. Sometimes the extended family is related only by tradition or history, and children respectfully call their elders by the titles *tío* and *tía* (uncle and aunt).

Beginnings and endings are critical milestones for Latino families. An infant's baptism, the first birthday, the first day of school, Mother's Day, *El día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead), *quinceañeras* (a girl's 15th birthday), weddings and funerals are all examples of significant beginnings and endings. *El día del niño* (Children's Day) is the most widely celebrated holiday in Mexico, with buses offering free transportation for children, movies shown free in theaters and schools holding festivals in honor of children.

These events are observed with large family gatherings and can last for two or three days if families have traveled from afar. Rituals play important roles in maintaining tradition—who



sits where, who eats first, how the conversation at the table flows. Greetings play a significant role, too. It is unheard of for family members to arrive at an event without recognizing the elders first.

The concept of being *bien educado* (well mannered) is the Latino family's primary structure for passing on traditions and appropriate behaviors. A child that is *bien educado* is one who observes the family values.

Spirituality plays an important role in Latino families, and many religious traditions are interwoven into the lifestyle. A baptism is not only a religious event for the infant, but also an enormous family ritual in which uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins and others declare their intentions to guide and support the baby in his development and moral upbringing.

Other important traditional values of Latino families include respect for elders, hard work and pride in one's cultural heritage. The family does everything together, from welcoming a newborn cousin at the hospital, to preparing for the first day of school, to congratulating a 15-year-old at her *quinceañera* party, to attending the funeral of a great aunt. Family gatherings form the foundation of Latino life. This may be one reason Latinos have one of the highest rates for intact families in the United States.

Everyone in the Latino family is responsible for every other member's well-being and behavior. This lesson of interconnectedness is taught early, when children become responsible for each other. Because of long work hours and larger-than-average families, older siblings frequently have a major responsibility for the care of younger children. Even teenagers follow this tradition, with siblings and cousins sharing their earliest romantic experiences by double dating and reminding each other of family rules.

Family connectedness is an important element to consider in planning programs and services. Doctors in Texas jokingly say, "Bring out more chairs," when a Latino is in the hospital.



Whether a child is being born or an elder is seriously ill, the entire family will show up at the hospital and frequently camp out until they know the results of the patient's condition.

Successful Latino community programs often recreate the extended family support structure as a resource for providing services. This concept is especially valuable in multigenerational networks with cross-age tutoring, teen parent mentoring and family literacy programs. The *promotora* (health promoter) programs that have evolved over the last few decades are primary examples of how the extended family concept has been integrated into health care services. The health promoter is like a member of the extended family.

When asked the question, "What is the most important thing to you?" the typical Latino will respond with one word: "family."

### **Cultural expression**

Latinos agree that cultural expression is very important and highly respected. Murals are frequently painted by community groups on walls of housing projects and are rarely disfigured by graffiti. Cultural expression is evident in all forms of art, from dramatic presentations to sculpture, folk art, music and dance. Cultural expression is also evident in the colors selected for painting a home, the jewelry one wears and the celebrations the community observes. Color is seen as an essential element in daily life.



*Teatros* (theatrical productions) and *novelas* (TV soap operas) have become popular vehicles of communication for education. Street theater performances have existed since before printing presses were available and continue to be a form of both entertainment and education. A number of HIV/AIDS awareness programs in the United States have one-act plays that are performed in the *teatro* style to convey information to the community. *Novelas* have become a great connector among Latinos, especially since Spanish-language television has become more available. In restaurants and homes throughout the country, Latinos gather around the TV each evening to see the next chapter of their favorite *novela*.

## How culture can help

Culture is a dynamic element in our lives, and as Latinos interact with non-Latinos, we learn from each other. The process of acculturation often becomes a two-way street where Latinos celebrate Saint Patrick's Day while non-Latinos buy *piñatas* for their children's birthday parties. The more we interact with each other, the more likely we are to understand each other.

Health programs that are effective in the Latino community seek a balance between respecting cultural practices and interfering in the culture. By understanding how culture works, programs can introduce new information and change behaviors that put Latinos at risk.

To ensure that *Onda Sana* achieves this balance between respecting culture and using culture to change the way families discuss risky behaviors, and to ensure that the program's messages and strategies are culturally relevant across Latino groups, *Onda Sana* was

developed with input from young Latinos and tested by Latino community-based organizations.

Despite the fact that some cultural attitudes may result in a reluctance to have conversations about sexuality or to behave with "false *machismo*," cultural values can serve to open new doors to information about the risks of HIV. Consider the power of an informed teen to set an example and provide information to younger siblings and cousins.

As young Latinos begin planning for their future, one way to gain control of their destiny is to create their own *onda sana*, or healthy wave, across the United States. *Onda Sana* strives to help Latino youth create their future and shape their destiny by achieving the following objectives:

- Reduce risk of HIV infection by strengthening cultural values and identity among 9- to 15-year-old Latinos, empowering them with knowledge to make informed choices and avoid dangerous situations, and giving them communication skills to inform others about the risks.
- Build community capacity to reduce behaviors that put young Latinos at risk for HIV infection by organizing youth to lead their peers to change risky behaviors.
- Open dialogue between Latino teens and their parents or other adult mentors by creating a stir in the community about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.
- Develop a culturally appropriate public education initiative for the prevention of HIV infection among young Latinos through use of public service announcements, community special events and youth forums.





# 2

## Organizing the Onda Sana Project

*Onda Sana* is a program that emphasizes the importance of young people making healthy choices and creating a cadre of like-minded peers—creating *una onda sana*, a healthy wave. The facilitators' role in the process is to provide the space, materials and guidance for the youth.

### Using the kit

The *Onda Sana* materials are flexible and can be used in a variety of settings from schools to clinics. In addition, the special events give community groups the opportunity to highlight the issues surrounding the reduction of HIV/AIDS. Materials such as a youth notebook, stickers, a poster and a T-shirt provide visual reminders to young people to choose *una onda sana*.

### Materials

#### Escoje tu destino

The notebook, available in English and Spanish, encourages young people to reflect on their lives and the choices they can make. Included in the book are tips for teens to talk to their parents or other adults they trust, to take charge of their

lives, and to set goals and exercise their rights, as well as resources, including Web sites and hotlines. Coordinators can use this book to complement *Onda Sana*. Also included on the NLCI Web site ([www.nlci.org](http://www.nlci.org)).

#### CD-Rom

The CD-Rom contains sample materials for the activities and community events that can be easily accessed and printed:

**Onda Sana logo.** The official logo and font should be included on all materials for the project. You must use the logo only for *Onda Sana*-related activities. Different versions of the logo are included, depending on the material that will be produced.

**Poster.** A sample poster, *¡Escoje tu destino!*, can be used to announce the start of the program or to encourage youth choose their destiny.

**Stickers.** Stickers with the *Escoje tu destino* message are included. These can be distributed at special events or at the end of each session, similar to the "I voted" stickers dis-

tributed on election days. The stickers can become a symbol of young people choosing a healthy lifestyle!





**T-shirt design.** Using the sample T-shirt design, facilitators can work with vendors or high school art classes to produce T-shirts for peer educators, volunteers for special events, etc.

**Fact sheets, surveys, quizzes and resources.** Facilitators have permission to print copies of the fact sheets, surveys, quizzes and resource lists for use in meetings, trainings and activities. These are included in both the handbook and the CD-Rom:

- **Latino Youth and HIV/AIDS: What Parents Should Know:** A fact sheet with statistics on HIV/AIDS and Latino youth—especially useful for parent *pláticas* (see Chapter 4, Parental Involvement, p. 22)
- **Tips for “The Talk”:** A handout designed to help parents begin conversations about tough topics such as risky behaviors; for use in parent *pláticas* (see Chapter 4, Parental Involvement, pp. 23–24)
- **I Knew That! and Eso, ¡ya lo sabía!:** True/false quiz about HIV/AIDS, in English and Spanish; can be used as a pretest in parent *pláticas* (see Chapter 4, Parental Involvement, pp. 25–26)
- **So What Do You Think?:** English-language true/false quiz about HIV/AIDS; designed for use in youth activities (see Chapter 8, Measuring Success, p. 75)
- **HIV/AIDS Awareness Survey and Encuesta sobre el VIH y el SIDA:** Survey, in English and Spanish, testing participants’ knowledge of HIV/AIDS; can be used as a pre- or post-test in both youth and parent activities (see Chapter 8, Measuring Success, pp. 76–77)
- **User Questionnaire:** Questionnaire for facilitators to complete and return to NLCI; designed to provide feedback on the *Onda Sana* program (see Chapter 8, Measuring Success, pp. 78–80)

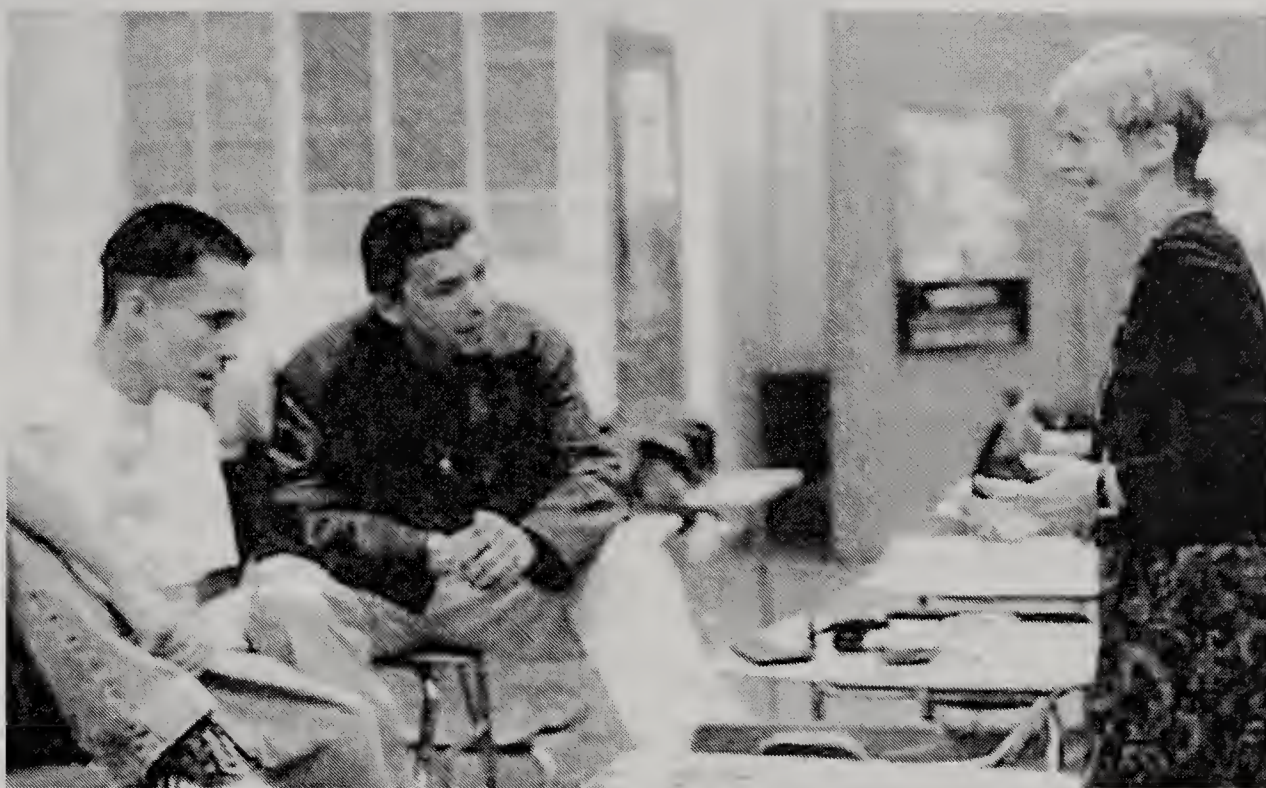
- **Web sites and hotlines:** Resources with information on topics ranging from sexuality to HIV/AIDS, to how to talk to your parents/child, to poetry slams and *El día de los muertos*; designed for use with parents and youth (see Chapter 9, Resources, pp. 81–84)

- **Just the Facts: Young Latinos and HIV/AIDS:** A fact sheet with statistics on HIV/AIDS, Latino youth, Latino families, trends, etc. (more detailed than the Latino Youth and HIV/AIDS: What Parents Should Know fact sheet in Chapter 4); designed for use by facilitators, youth and parents (see Chapter 9, Resources, pp. 85–88)

**Press materials.** Four sample press releases, as well as sample public service announcements, are included on the CD-Rom. Feel free to change them to meet your needs—take from them all you want and add new information as you see fit. Be sure to refer to Chapter 7, Media Outreach, which has a detailed nuts-and-bolts plan for working with your local media and how to create releases that will get the message out about programs and events. Sample releases, in English and Spanish, are as follows:

- **National press release:** You can tailor the information in the national press release to explain what *Onda Sana* is about and who the National Latino Children’s Institute is. You’ll also find brief information about how other communities are using the program.
- **Sample release on a special event** (creating *altares* for *El día de los muertos*): *Altares* can be a powerful vehicle to involve the community in discussions about HIV/AIDS, how it can be prevented, and how parents and youth can go about having candid conversations about the topic. This release announces an *altares* exhibit and explains the traditions behind it.
- **Short sample release on youth teatro:** A shorter version of a release—giving only





the who, what, where, when and a little bit of the why. Particularly useful for getting your event listed in a newspaper calendar of community events.

- **Sample release on World AIDS Day event:** Use this release as a guideline for announcing an *Onda Sana* event your organization is holding in conjunction with World AIDS Day, which takes place around the globe on December 1.

### **Onda Sana Web site**

The National Latino Children's Institute has developed pages on its Web site ([www.nlci.org](http://www.nlci.org)) specifically for people using the *Onda Sana* program. New pages will be added periodically, along with new games, materials and ideas. These materials will be available for downloading or printing.

### **Working with schools and communities**

The *Onda Sana* initiative is flexible so that it can be used in a variety of settings, from schools and clinics to community centers and youth church groups. To reverse the numbers of young Latinos being infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, it is important that everyone in

the community work together to provide accurate information, as well as places where young people can go to learn.

While many schools provide their students with basic information about sexuality, drug and alcohol use and abuse, and making healthy choices, many are constrained in the type and amount of information they are allowed to offer.

Sometimes it is difficult to start this type of a project in a school. In Las Cruces, N.M., Peter García, the community involvement coordinator of La Clínica de la Familia, was told that the students' parents did not want them to learn about HIV/AIDS or sexuality. Mr. García met with the parents and discovered that, in fact, they wanted to have a program in the school! After some discussion, the parents met with the principal and a program was begun.

A facilitator may need to advocate for this information to get to the students, not only with school officials, but also with the families themselves. Many families are concerned that their children will be more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors if they are provided with information. Chapter 4, Parental Involvement, provides tips and activities for working with families.

In addition, it is important to involve the whole community. Creating a community advisory committee that includes parents, students, school administrators, businesspeople and others can help garner attention and support for the program. Highlighting the issue by planning some of the special events described in Chapter 6 can provide facilitators and youth with the impetus to create positive change in their community and get everyone talking about creating a healthy wave.

### **Youth involvement**

One of the most important components of the *Onda Sana* program is youth involvement. Youth can provide not only new ideas, but also the energy to get the whole community involved. Youth can also serve as peer educators/*promotores* and lead the activities.

Chapter 3, *Speaking Out*, provides more information on how to involve youth.

### **Fund-raising**

While many of the activities and games require few or no funds, the special events may make it necessary for coordinators to raise funds or solicit donations. Each special event lists possible types of organizations or businesses that could provide some of the materials.

In addition, organizations should consider writing proposals to their local and state health departments, philanthropic organizations and others to request funding for the program.

Finally, some of the activities may generate funding, especially if a small admission fee is charged for events such as the poetry slams or *corridos*.





# 3

## Speaking Out

### Empowering youth to express themselves

*Onda Sana* is designed to respect, honor and support youth, the driving force behind the program. By providing youth with the tools to discover their extraordinary capabilities, facilitators will accelerate and sustain young people's natural leadership skills. *Onda Sana* can

- provide youth with a place to grow and to develop a sense of identity
- reach out to youth who have not traditionally been viewed as leaders
- encourage young people to examine their own experiences and make good choices
- share with youth the pride and history of their culture
- inspire youth to clearly discern their goals and dreams, as well as their focus, courage and creativity to shape community change

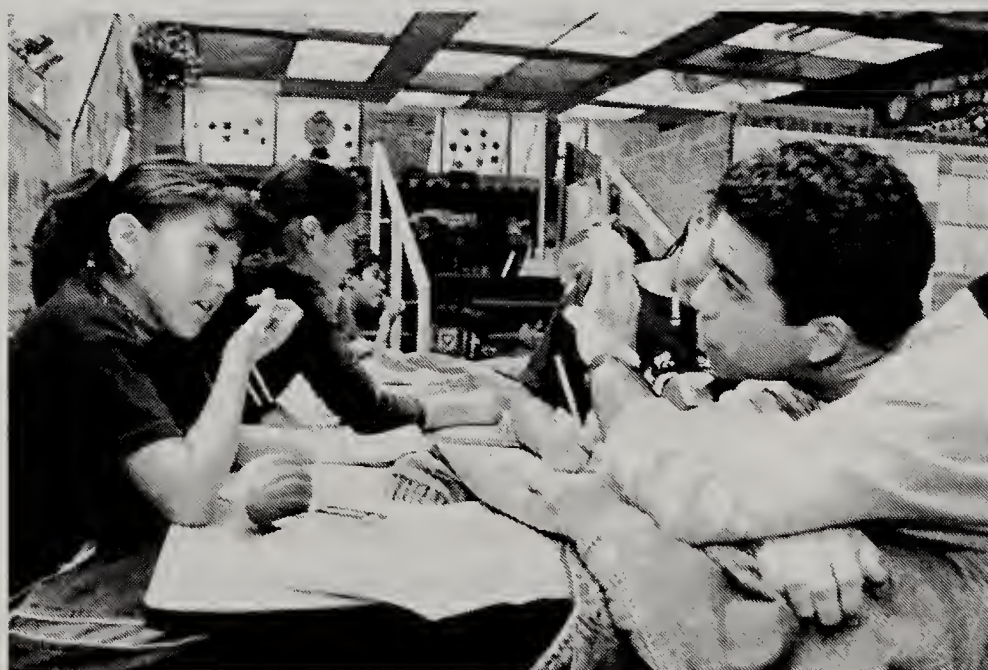
- teach youth the necessary skills to effectively organize themselves
- encourage youth to relate to peers and adults
- help youth think about the responsibilities and consequences involved in making choices

By building youth's confidence to find their own voice, *Onda Sana* enables youth to become more aware of their motivations, personal goals and ambitions.

*Onda Sana* is designed to provide opportunities for discussions about risky behaviors, values and other topics associated with increased risk for HIV/AIDS in the family and community. Facilitators should use the activities outlined below as a starting point for helping youth talk with the media, their parents and other adults.

### Talking to the media

In most communities, young Latinos are invisible in the media—unless they've committed a crime. Youth can use *Onda Sana* to create a healthy wave in their community, not only in regard to HIV/AIDS, but also in how the media views young Latinos.







Facilitators can assist in this task by providing opportunities for young people to conduct interviews with both print and electronic media—in English and Spanish. Facilitators should use the special events—including those focusing on *El día de los muertos* and World AIDS Day—to highlight

the contributions that young people are making to build a healthier community. In addition, facilitators can work with the youth to write op-ed pieces for local newspapers. Op-ed pieces are opinion pieces written by a reader on a topic that is relevant to the newspaper's audience. The author almost always has explicit knowledge of or experience with their topic. (See Chapter 7, Media Outreach, for more information on working with the media.)

Facilitators should keep in mind the following points when scheduling interviews:

1. Everyone must be prepared. Set up a time when a sample question can be asked and answered. This will cut down on nervousness.
2. While youth should feel comfortable with their style of clothing, they should also keep in mind the image they are trying to project. In addition, busy patterns, including stripes, or white clothing, should not be worn for a television interview.
3. Youth who are being interviewed on-camera for television should look at the camera, not necessarily at the interviewer. Remind them that their real audience is the television viewer, and while it may feel unnatural to look so long at the camera, it's what the viewer expects and is accustomed to.
4. Personal stories are appreciated and often add the right touch to an interview.

5. Facts and figures are important because they can support a position, but the reporter should not be overwhelmed with statistics.
6. Facilitators should always be present when a young person is being interviewed, not only for support but also to provide additional material if necessary and feedback when the interview has concluded.
7. Get to know the reporter and thank them when they do a good job.

## Talking to parents

A 1997 Kaiser Family Foundation study found that 70 percent of Latino parents said they were very concerned about their children getting HIV (compared to 52 percent of all parents), and 70 percent of Latino parents wanted more information on what to discuss with children about HIV and AIDS, compared with 46 percent of the general public. Yet many Latino parents do not discuss issues of sexuality, sex or even risky behaviors with their children or teenagers. Because these are considered taboo topics, many young people are growing up woefully ignorant of the basic functions of their bodies and how their behavior—including drinking, drug use and unprotected sex—increases their risk of infection.

Facilitators can use the special events described in Chapter 6 to start a dialogue in which parents and their children can discuss these issues. Creating an altar for *El día de los muertos* or writing poems about their dreams can lead to that moment when the adults are finally comfortable speaking about difficult subjects.

## Finding someone to talk to

Although *Onda Sana* is built on the understanding that properly trained young people can provide information to each other on serious topics such as HIV/AIDS, they must also have an adult they trust and feel comfortable enough with to talk about difficult issues.



Youth sometimes feel that they cannot speak with their parents or guardians, and in cases like these it is critical that they find another adult—a caring *tía* or *tío*, teacher, counselor, friend or neighbor—whom they can go to for help and information.

## Peer education groups/ promotores

*Onda Sana* is ideally suited for organizations that currently use a peer education or *promotor* model for imparting information. All of the games and activities can be led by youth, and in many cases may elicit more in-depth discussions if youth lead them. Facilitators should conduct a training that includes each activity prior to assigning the task to peer educators/*promotores*.

## Writing poetry and corridos

It is important for youth to feel that they have an outlet to share and express their feelings and, when appropriate, to feel that adults are listening. Facilitators should provide youth with several options for expressing themselves. HIV/AIDS can be a taboo topic in many groups, and outlets such as writing poetry and *corridos* may make it easier for youth to get their point across. Encouraging youth to share their experiences in any creative way will engage them to discuss their experiences with and feelings about HIV/AIDS. When youth are acknowledged and listened to, a world of learning can begin.

Facilitators may wish to ask youth to keep a journal of their feelings and thoughts as they go through the *Onda Sana* program. The facilitator may wish to pose thoughtful questions that elicit strong feelings from the group. Depending on the age of the participants, the questions can range from naming people they trust and exploring why to discussions of “what would happen if . . .”

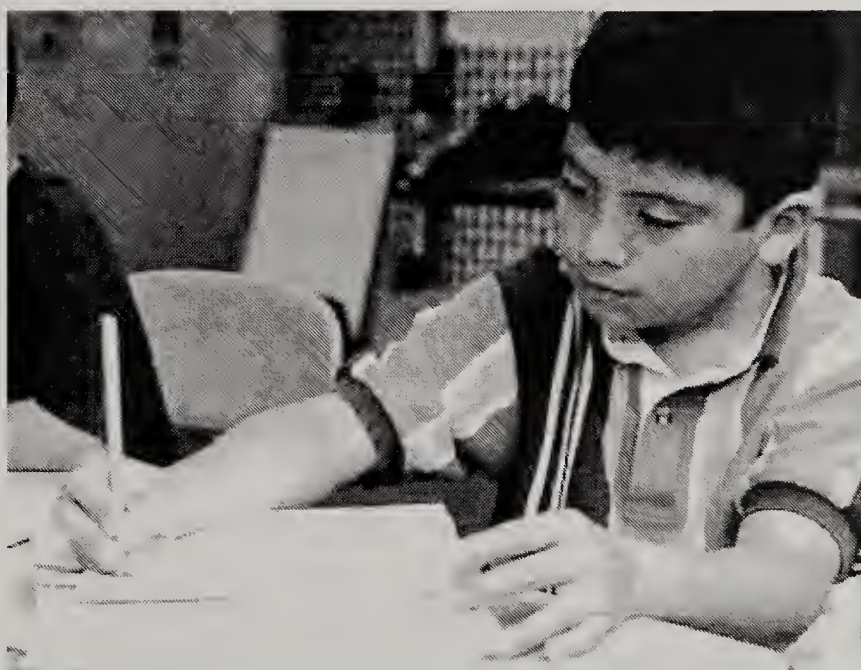
Facilitators can also encourage youth to write letters describing their feelings. Whether the

letter is to their parents, a friend or a teacher, it can be a place where all their emotions can be described. This can be a cathartic experience for a youth who is afraid of sharing his experiences with someone directly.

Other activities found in Chapter 6 provide opportunities to write about risky behaviors, including the poetry slams, *corridos*, *teatros* and *calaveras*.

### Poetry slams

The poetry slam originated in the mid-1980s when a Chicago poet named Marc Smith came up with the idea of a poetry competition to entertain the Sunday regulars at a bar called the Green Mill. To push it a little further, judges were chosen at random from the audience to “score” the poems. Several years and many stages of evolution later, the poetry slam is a national phenomenon. A poetry slam is like a lyrical boxing match that pits poets against each other over a short period of time. For more information about poetry slams, see the poetry slam activity described in Chapter 6 and links to poetry Web sites in Chapter 9.



### Corridos

The *corrido* (ballad) emerged in the nineteenth century as a form of narrative song that flourished along the U.S.-Mexico border. The *corrido* is a poem set to music describing significant events that the poet and his audience closely share. *Corrido* narratives encompass a



diversity of themes ranging from family and love conflicts; to violent engagements such as banditry, skirmishes and war; to disasters, death and even personal animosities. *Corridos* also promote strong family and community values. Organizing a *corrido* contest or concert can be a great way to encourage youth to express themselves in a culturally relevant way.

## **Designing billboards, posters and tag lines**

Youth are imaginative, inspiring, innovative and artistic. What better way to implement the *Onda Sana* program than by having youth create the outreach for the project? By including youth in every aspect of *Onda Sana*, facilitators will have a better understanding of the community needs and youth will feel a sense of responsibility and ownership in the program. Facilitators can assign the design of the billboards, tag lines and posters to youth involved in the project.

Facilitators can schedule a poster contest with a series of topics such as HIV/AIDS and family discussions, the repercussions of making a bad choice, why safe sex is the best sex, pride in waiting, the family as a celebration, etc. The posters can be sold to the community as a fund-raising and awareness activity.

The same type of contest can be held for tag lines. Encourage youth to create tag lines, or messages, that will work with other youth in their community. The tag line can be used in conjunction with the billboards and posters. A focus group with youth yielded the following tag lines: "Condoms are a lot easier to wear than diapers," "Sex can wait—masturbate," "No glove, no love" and "Before you have sex, get to know yourself first." While programs may not choose to be so outspoken in their statements, it's important to understand

how youth talk and express themselves. Keep in mind that a billboard for adults may not necessarily work for youth.

*Onda Sana* is a wonderfully flexible program that allows each community to create multiple opportunities for youth not only to become involved, but also to become spokespersons about creating a healthy wave for everyone.

## **Helping youth present their case**

Preparing youth to be spokespersons for *Onda Sana* is a vital part of the program. In order for other youth, as well as community leaders, school officials and parents, to understand the program's purpose, youth should be well prepared to present *Onda Sana*. The youth will be involved in talking to many people on many different levels.

- Prepare youth with background information on HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage youth to practice speeches, discussions and presentations; see Talking to the Media in this chapter and Tips for Effective Interviews in Chapter 7, Media Outreach, for tips on how to present your case, speak in front of a group or speak in front of a camera.
- Encourage youth to organize their thoughts by writing them down.
- Prepare talking points.
- Discuss any fears that the youth have about being spokespersons.
- Videotape youth's presentations and have their peers discuss the positive attributes and areas that need improvement.
- Let the youth know that they are supported by everyone in the program.





# 4

## Parental Involvement

One of the goals of *Onda Sana* is to create opportunities for young people to discuss difficult subjects with their parents, even though, for many adult Latinos, the subjects of sexuality and sex are considered taboo. By using cultural celebrations and traditions, *Onda Sana* activities can be the spark that creates an atmosphere where parents and their children feel more comfortable discussing these issues.

### ¿Mis hijos? No way!

Most parents believe that their children are wonderful—that they don't do the wrong thing or engage in behaviors that are risky. Many have a difficult time coming to terms with the reality that their children are growing up and having "those thoughts" and feelings. It's even harder for parents to imagine that their children might actually be engaged in sexual play, experimenting with drugs and drinking, and putting themselves in danger. While not all youth place themselves in these situations, statistics bear out the truth: there are many who have chosen to experiment with hazardous situations.

Part of the reason for the disconnect between what parents believe (or choose to believe) and youth behavior is a lack of communication and knowledge about the realities facing young people. In today's society, with formidable pressures from peers, television, movies and music, young people are thinking of the opposite sex in a sexual way at an earlier age than ever before. Some music celebrates the joys of drinking and experimenting with drugs, while other music and media is frankly



sexual in content. Youth are constantly bombarded with feel-good advertisements for beer and the message that to be sexually active is to be "cool."

Parents can offset these messages by spending time with their youth, talking to them and helping them set goals for the future. Children who have goals and feel that someone loves them are not as likely to engage in these dangerous behaviors.

Parents have to start these conversations when their children are young—not just during the preteen or teen years. Communication is built on years of trust and understanding. A child whose questions are answered truthfully in his early years will come back to the source of the information.

Some parents, especially Latinos, may find this a difficult and possibly embarrassing topic of conversation. After all, their parents



didn't talk about those things! The question that needs to be asked is, "If not you (the parent), then who?" Young people will get their answers wherever they can find them—a friend, the television, books, etc.—but studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation ([www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)) show that most youth would prefer to get their information from their parents.

## **Organizing parent volunteers**

Parent volunteers can be a tremendous asset, as they provide extra hands when you're plan-

ning special events or during everyday activities. Facilitators need to carefully screen parents and ensure that their participation will not stifle their child's input to the program. If possible, arrange for parents to work with other groups that do not include their children. In addition, parent volunteers should go through a strenuous training to ensure that their views are similar to those of the program.

Parent and adult involvement is a necessary ingredient to ensure children's later success. Including them as volunteers, sounding boards and partners in *Onda Sana* can only enhance the program.





# Organizing Parent Pláticas

*Pláticas*, or *charlas* (chats), provide the perfect opportunity for adults to discuss sex, sexuality and risky behaviors. Facilitators can use the *plática* to reassure families that their children are not “learning to have sex” while discussing prevention of diseases, but rather learning how to stay safe. The *charla* can also be used to impart information about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as many Latinos still do not have accurate information about how they are contracted or the best ways to reduce the risk of infection.

## Objective

The goal of this activity is to provide parents and other interested adults with a safe place where they can learn how to communicate with their children on issues such as hazardous situations and how to avoid them, drug abuse, sexuality, valuing themselves and planning for their future.

## Possible topics

- Understanding HIV/AIDS
- *Comunicando*—communicating with your child (preteen or teen)
- Passing values and traditions on to the younger generation
- Creating family activities for *El día de los muertos*
- Sex, drugs and rock and roll: Growing up today
- Disciplining together: You and your teen
- Family communication
- Sexuality

## Materials

- Nametags
- Markers
- Chart tablet
- Drinks
- Snacks
- Door prize

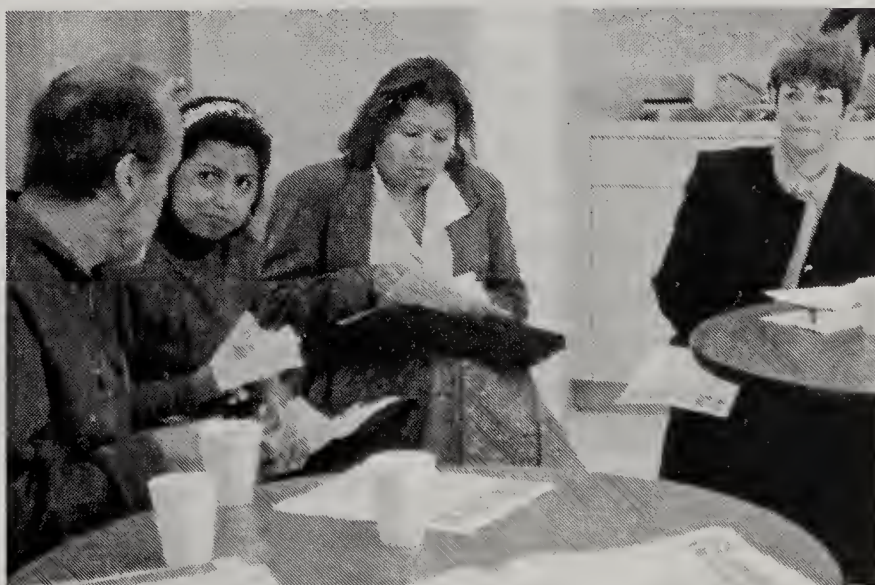
## Items to budget for

- Snacks
- Beverages

## Planning

Facilitators should consider scheduling a series of *pláticas* so that families have the opportunity to fully discuss each issue. Parents will have suggestions, problems, solutions and even new ways to look at a particularly thorny issue.

Check with the families who are interested in participating before scheduling a *plática*. Many Latinos work multiple jobs or late shifts, and attending a meeting at 6 p.m. may be impossible. Also, it is necessary to take into account regular family activities that might prevent parents from attending a meeting.





Remember that the whole family may attend, so providing child care, with activities for a range of ages, is necessary. Family elders also may choose to attend.

Door prizes are always great incentives and great fun. Ask local businesses to donate a small gift certificate or a gift such as a book.

### **Contacting the families**

Families must feel that they have a personal invitation to the *plática*. It may be necessary to visit the families in their homes to invite them. Explain that parents will be getting together to discuss the safety of their youth. Many Latino parents will not respond to a flyer inviting them—the personal invitation is best.

### **Staffing**

Two people should facilitate the *plática*, and both must be bilingual and bicultural.

Three to five people are needed to help set up, especially if child care will be provided. Depending on the number and ages of the children, four to ten bilingual staff members are needed. If possible, the child care providers should be known to the children. The staff-to-child ratio should, at a minimum, adhere to state standards.

### **Location, location, location**

A *plática* can be held anywhere—a church or synagogue, child care center, clinic, school or community center—but, above all, the location should be a site that is well known to families and where they feel safe. There should be plenty of chairs, as well as tables to display materials and serve a snack. Other items, such as a chart tablet, screen and audio-visual equipment are not necessary, but they may help ease the role of the facilitator.

### **Setup**

The chairs should be placed in a circle around the room to encourage discussion among participants. A table with nametags and the sign-

in sheet can be set up outside the room, while the snack and drinks should be set up in the back of the room to encourage people to enter and mingle.

### **Starting the activity**

The facilitators must greet everyone as they come in the door. If there are new people in the group, facilitators should allow them to introduce themselves. Schedule time before the *plática* or *charla* begins for participants to meet and get to know each other or just to chat. The event should feel as if friends have gotten together at someone's home.

After everyone has had a chance to mingle, the facilitators should invite the parents to sit. If people don't know each other, facilitators should ask everyone to introduce themselves: name, where they were born and how many children they have. The facilitators should also introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the meeting, any ground rules and the approximate time the *charla* will end. If it is a small group, use one of the activities from Chapter 5 as an icebreaker. An activity will provide the parents with a starting point for asking questions, voicing concerns, etc. Facilitators can also use the Tips for "The Talk" handout as a starting point for discussing how to communicate with teens or give them the parent quiz (I Knew That!).

Because all parents arrive with some knowledge of each topic, the facilitator should encourage families to share solutions with each other. As problems are aired, facilitators might say, "Has anyone had this problem? What did you do? How did you solve it?" They should allow participants to find their own solutions. This will help create a congenial atmosphere that people will want to return to.

Facilitators may also want to have parents role-play to better demonstrate positive behavior and to help parents become comfortable answering questions. Have parents play the roles of children and parents asking and



answering questions. If parents have had the opportunity to think about their answers and practice what they will say, they will feel more comfortable when they speak with their children.

If possible, facilitators should write ideas, solutions and questions to be explored on a chart tablet.

### **Getting involved**

At the conclusion of the meeting, ask for volunteers for the next meeting to follow up with each other and to provide snacks.

### **Wrapping up**

At the end of the *plática*, praise the families for their commitment to keeping their children safe. Each family member should receive the Tips for “The Talk” handout (if facilitators haven’t already distributed it during the *plática*). If the facilitator has a door prize, it should be raffled at this time.

Thank the families for attending. If there is any food left over, invite the families to take it home.

### **Evaluation**

The *plática* is a perfect opportunity to evaluate not only the participants’ prior knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS issues, but

also how much they learned during the *plática*. Evaluations should be developed in both Spanish and English. Use the participants’ suggestions as topics for other *pláticas*. The following questions can be used as a starting point for creating an evaluation.

- What was the most helpful information you learned?
- With whom will you share the information?
- Did the activity provide you with new information about HIV/AIDS, communicating with your child, etc.?
- What did you learn from the other participants?
- Did you learn new tips on how to keep talking to your teen?
- What other topics would you like to see?

### **Handouts**

*Onda Sana* facilitators have permission to photocopy the quiz, tips for talking to youth about HIV/AIDS and the HIV/AIDS fact sheet—all of which appear on the following pages—for use as handouts during meetings, trainings, etc. These materials are also included on the *Onda Sana* CD-Rom.





## **Latino Youth and HIV/AIDS: What Parents Should Know**

- Although Latino children make up only 12 percent of the population under age 13, they represent 24 percent of all pediatric AIDS cases.
- Although Latinos make up only about 15 percent of U.S. teenagers, they represent 20 percent of AIDS cases among teens.
- 20,000 youth ages 13 to 24 are infected with HIV every year. Based on this number—and the fact that Latino teens represent 20 percent of teen AIDS cases—we can estimate that approximately 4,000 Latino youth are infected with HIV a year.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), at least half of all new HIV cases occur in young people under age 25.
- As of June 2000, approximately 11,000 Latino youth ages 24 and under had been reported with AIDS, according to the CDC.
- The CDC reports the following AIDS cases in Latino boys through June 2000:
  - 766 youth ages 5 and under
  - 280 youth ages 5 to 12
  - 501 youth ages 13 to 19
  - 4,178 youth ages 20 to 24
- The CDC reports the following AIDS cases in Latino girls through June 2000:
  - 758 youth ages 5 and under
  - 212 youth ages 5 to 12
  - 274 youth ages 13 to 19
  - 1,486 youth ages 20 to 24
- The CDC reports that, through June 2000, 1,200 Latino youth under the age of 15 (626 males, 574 females) had died of AIDS.
- 1,807 Latino youth ages 15 to 24 (1,329 males, 478 females) had died of AIDS as of June 2000.
- Findings from a 1998 study showed that Latino teens who talked with their mothers about condoms before their first sexual intercourse were three times more likely to use condoms than those teens who did not talk to their mothers. Furthermore, condom use at first intercourse was associated with a 20-fold increase in lifetime condom use.
- Although Latinos make up only 13 percent of the population, they account for just over 20 percent of perinatally acquired AIDS cases.
- As of June 2000, the CDC reports that 741 Latinos under age 13 contracted AIDS through injection drug use; 491 contracted AIDS through sex with a injection drug user; and 256 contracted AIDS through sex with an HIV-infected partner.



## Tips for “The Talk”

Sometimes it’s difficult for parents to begin a conversation about tough topics like risky behaviors or to figure out when the time is right. There’s no right time, only wrong times—such as in the middle of an argument about something else (and another thing!), or while the kids are trying to get to school, or at *abuelita*’s house. Parents need to choose their time wisely!

The best thing to do is to imagine being nine or ten or twelve years old and confused about why you’re not popular—Maybe I should drink? Or smoke? Or do drugs?—or why your body is behaving “in a weird way.”

Expect your teenager to have erotic thoughts; this is a normal result of all those hormones racing through their bodies. Put yourself in your child’s shoes. Try to remember what it was like when you were in the age of uncertainty and great change—otherwise known as adolescence.



### Tips to get you started

- Take time to know your child.
- Let your child know that you are proud of them and that they are loved.
- Make the discussion fun—remember it’s a conversation, not a lecture. Most young people stop listening if parents aren’t making the effort to listen to them.
- Pick a time and place for the discussion in which your child can’t walk away—such as a long car ride.
- Listen, don’t judge. Ask for your child’s opinions and thoughts—they might surprise you!
- Be very direct, and learn the correct terms for the things you are discussing, includ-

ing body parts. Don’t call genital areas “down there” or other cute names your parents used.

- If your children are approaching puberty, explain the changes their bodies are experiencing.
- Share your values with your children. Explain the risks and consequences of their actions.

### When should you have “the talk”?

The best time to begin talking with your children is when they are young, but if you did not have conversations about risky behaviors, sex and sexuality with your child, it’s not too

late. It’s important that the conversation take place many times, as questions come up all the time for children. This will help ensure that your children understand that you will always be there for them and will be open to their questions and ideas.

Remember that everything that you do, not just what you say, teaches

your children about the values they should have. If you are open and honest, *cariñoso* with your family, they will grow up to be that way.

Make sure everyone is relaxed. If you are anxious and tense, the conversation will also be anxious and tense, and it could escalate into an argument because your child thinks you don’t trust him or her.

If this is the first time you’ve had such a discussion with your child, make it fun. Ask them questions (sometimes you have to ask it 15 different ways!). Ask about their opinions and what they think. You might be surprised by what they say.

### **Ways to get the conversation started**

Watch a movie together that might have the theme of your intended conversation. Then have a snack while you talk about how the people acted in the film.

If your child has shown good judgment in a situation—for example, maybe he called when a party got out of hand—take the time to praise his actions. Sit with your child and explain why you feel so good about them, and then use the opportunity to get the talking started.

Listen to your child; he or she may be asking questions about these topics and looking for guidance without you noticing. Statements such as, “You know, I’m not sure about that kid. He always seems to be kind of weird,” could be a start to a great discussion.

### **Opening lines**

**Direct:** Now that you are 10, I think there are a few things you should know . . .

**Educational:** You know that film you saw in health class? Tell me about some of the things you learned.

**Funny:** You know, when I was your age I was so confused! I thought that you could get pregnant by just sleeping next to a guy! Can you believe it? I sure had a lot to learn. What questions do you have?

**Reporter:** I just read this incredible report that says that more kids are using drugs than ever before. Do you think that’s true? Have you seen any of this happen at school? What do you think is going on?

**Shock:** I hear that Marco got a girl pregnant. Can you believe it? I wonder if his parents had this talk with him.

**Sadness:** I just found out that your big sister’s friend died of AIDS yesterday. She was so beautiful and full of life when she was young. I know that she did all sorts of things, and I want to talk to you about them.





## I Knew That!

Please answer these questions while thinking about your own experiences. All answers are True or False. Place a T or F in the space provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ My partner just got tested for HIV/AIDS and the test was negative. We should still use a condom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I only do drugs with my best friends, so I don't have to worry about sharing needles, because I've known my friends all my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can tell a person is infected just by looking at him or her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Only "bad" people get HIV/AIDS.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can get HIV/AIDS by kissing someone who is infected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My son/daughter is too young to get infected with HIV/AIDS, so I don't have to talk to them yet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can get infected if you do other stuff like oral or anal sex.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It doesn't matter if my child is infected because there will be a cure very soon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We shouldn't talk about these things, because it will encourage young people to have sex or try drugs or drinking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can't do anything to change how my child behaves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My children have never tried alcohol or drugs, so I don't have to talk to them about the dangers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There isn't a place I can go to talk about these things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My family never talked about these things, so I shouldn't talk to my kids about them.



## Eso, ¡ya lo sabía!

Por favor, tomando en cuenta sus propias experiencias, indique si las siguientes frases son ciertas o no. Si es cierta coloque una "C" en el renglón, si no es cierta anote una "F."

- \_\_\_\_\_ Aunque mi pareja se acaba de hacer la prueba y ésta indica que no tiene el VIH ni padece del SIDA, todavía deberíamos usar preservativos o condones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ya que sólo hago drogas con mis mejores amigos, quienes he conocido por toda la vida, no me tengo que preocupar si decidimos inyectarnos con la misma aguja.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Con sólo verlos es posible distinguir quien está infectado y quien no.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sólo la gente *mala* contrae el VIH o el SIDA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Es posible contraer el VIH y el SIDA besando a una persona infectada.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ya que mis hijos son demasiado jóvenes para contraer el VIH o el SIDA, aún no es necesario que hable con ellos de eso.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aunque lo única que hagas es el sexo oral o anal o cosas por el estilo, todavía te puedes infectar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ De verdad no importa que mi hijo esté infectado porque pronto habrá una cura.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lo único que se logra hablando de estos temas es alentar el consumo de drogas y alcohol o las relaciones sexuales entre la juventud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nada que yo haga cambiará la forma de ser o el comportamiento de mis hijos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ya que mis hijos jamás han consumido alcohol o drogas, no es necesario que hable con ellos en cuanto a estos peligros.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No existe un lugar donde pueda ir a averiguar más sobre estos temas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ En mi familia nunca se tocaban estos temas así que tampoco debo yo comentarlos con mis hijos.





# 5

## Activities and Games for Information and Skill Building

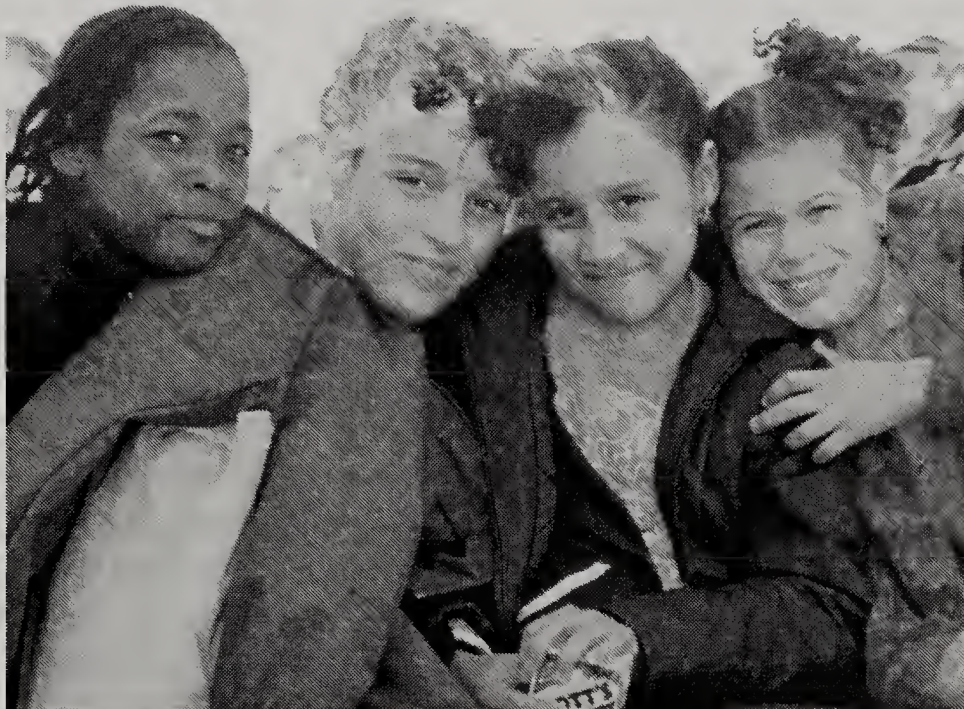
Much has been written on what youth need in order to succeed, including caring adults, a sense of purpose, self-worth and a place in the community. The following exercises and activities provide a starting place for adults and peer leaders to gauge youth's understanding of the risk behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS and to build the skills they need to make healthy choices, *para una onda sana*.

Each activity helps youth understand the far-reaching consequences of their actions, not only for themselves but also for their family and community. While all of the activities

are planned for youth, many are suitable for adults, especially if they are used to help them understand the importance of talking to their children about HIV/AIDS prevention.

Use these activities as a guide. Facilitators may wish to adapt the activities to better reflect the cultural nuances of the particular Latino group they work with. In addition, some activities are better suited for older youth; it is imperative that facilitators and peer educators review the activities in advance

and evaluate the suitability of the activities for the age of the participants.







## ¿Qué puedes perder?

During the teen years, it is difficult to imagine one's life coming to an end or to consider the possibility that a catastrophic illness could change the course of a life. Most young people see themselves as invincible: they'll never be in a car crash or a roller-blading accident, and they'll never get sick—that happens to someone else. This activity provides youth with an opportunity to contemplate the effects that becoming infected with HIV/AIDS could have on their life.

This activity is a variation of a classic activity used in youth HIV/AIDS prevention circles. It has been culturally adapted to better reach young Latinos.

**Note:** This activity can bring up lots of emotions, and it may be difficult for the youth to deal with the idea of loss, especially if they have experienced or are experiencing loss. The facilitator should know the youth well and be comfortable dealing with the emotions that may surface. If the facilitator is unprepared or feels the need for assistance, a counselor should also participate in the activity.

### Messages

- Making choices will have an effect on your life and the on lives of those you love.
- Your life will not be the same if you are infected with HIV/AIDS.
- These are some of the potential losses of a person with HIV/AIDS.

Group size: Up to 20 youth.

### Materials

- Pens or pencils
- One 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper for each participant
- Nametags
- Chart tablet or blackboard
- Chart markers or chalk
- Snacks

### Space requirements

A comfortable room with chairs and tables

### Staffing

Two people

### Setup

The tables and chairs should be arranged in a circle or an open rectangle, allowing for the easy flow of conversation. A table near the door can hold the nametags and other materials, while a table in the back of the room can serve as the site for the snack. This will encourage the young people to enter the room and move away from the entrance.

### Welcome

The facilitator should greet each person individually as they arrive. If the youth do not know each other, they should be invited to introduce themselves while they are enjoying the snack. One of the staff may need to help facilitate introductions. Allow approximately ten minutes for youth to become comfortable with each other and the setting.

### Starting the activity

The facilitator should formally welcome the group and begin the activity by asking participants to think about their lives at the present time. While everything may not be perfect, what do they like about their lives? The facilitator should also encourage participants to think about the people they love, the activities they enjoy and the goals they have set for themselves.

### Steps

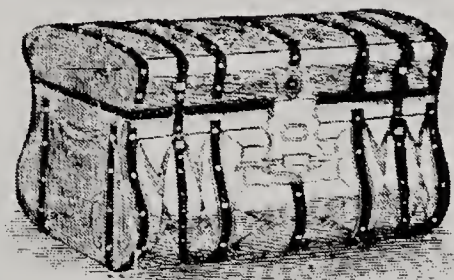
- Give each person a sheet of paper and ask them to fold the paper in half, then fold it in half again, and twice more until it is a small square, and then tear the paper along the folds. This will create 16 small squares. Explain that the tears do not have to be perfect.



- Ask everyone to place the papers in front of them in four equal stacks. Explain that each stack represents a part of their life, and that they will be writing one item on each sheet of paper.

1. First stack: Ask the participants to write the name of a person who is very important to them on each of the four squares of paper. Each square should contain only one name.
2. Second stack: Ask the participants to write four activities they love to do—again, one activity per square.
3. Third stack: Ask the participants to write four things they treasure—something that belongs to them, such as a car, a dog, faith, sobriety, etc.
4. Fourth stack: Finally, ask the participants to write four goals that they have for their life.

The goals can be short-term or long-range goals, such as graduating from college, passing a test or getting married.



- When everyone has finished, participants should spread the papers out and look at their life (the papers do not have to be in any particular order). How do they feel looking at their lives? Do they have important people that care about them? What are their goals?
- Next, the facilitator should go around the room and take some papers from each person, varying the number taken from person to person, making sure to take a lot from some people and only one or two from others. The facilitator should leave one or two people with just a few parts of their lives, if possible, taking a few papers from one person and “wiping out” the person sitting next to them.
- Next, ask the participants to look at their “life” and to think about whether they can

go on with what’s left. Explain that “going on” is different for each person, that each one will have an item they feel is so important that they could not go on living without it.

- The next step is to ask each person, individually, what they have left and whether they can go on. For some, this may be a very painful question and will bring up feelings they may not have dealt with. Ask questions like “You lost your health. Can you still go on with the activities you like to do, like basketball or roller-blading?” or “You lost your mother. Why might a person lose their mother if they were living with HIV/AIDS?” or “Why couldn’t you finish college if you had HIV/AIDS?” These questions can help youth think about the effects of the disease on their lives. The facilitator should

allow time for each person to think about their life and how it would change if they were infected.

- If someone says they cannot go on, the facilitator must ask them why not and then remove all of their papers, telling them that they have died. The facilitator should be prepared to deal with the feelings that this elicits, not only in the person who has “died” but in the other people in the room.
- Next, the facilitator should go around the room again and take more squares away from the participants, leaving a few almost intact. Again, ask everyone to look at what’s left and ask them if they can go on. Some may say that it isn’t fair that some people lost almost everything while others were able to keep most of their lives intact. Ask the participants whether life is fair. Ask them to consider whether the person who was able to keep their life made better choices and therefore had better opportunities.

### **La plática**

After everyone has had a chance to think about their losses and their ability to go on, the facilitator should ask the youth to think about how they felt when they started to lose the things they considered important in their lives. This is a great opportunity to use the chart tablet or blackboard to write down the feelings the youth describe and to help them see the wide range of responses to the HIV/AIDS issue. When they are finished, the facilitator should ask them to think about how their loved ones would feel if they were diagnosed with the HIV/AIDS virus. How would it affect their family—their *abuelita*, father, mother and cousins?

### **Steps**

- Next, draw a line down the center of a chart tablet or blackboard. On one side write “Risks” and on the other write “Choices.”
- Ask the youth to list the behaviors that would put them at risk for having to face the losses they named.
- Finally, ask the youth to name choices they can make to minimize the risks of infection. Encourage youth to think of choosing to live—to make choices that will keep them healthy.

### **La despedida**

The facilitator should end the session by thanking the youth for their honesty and for sharing their feelings and knowledge with each other.



## La cama del matrimonio

Imagining the lifetime consequences of engaging in risky behaviors can be very difficult for a young teen, especially if the choices are made while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Today's culture glamorizes not only sex, but also the use of alcohol and drugs to enhance the "good times." Youth are bombarded with images and messages in movies, music and television that sell the idea of indiscriminate sex, alcohol and "partying." This activity will provide youth with an opportunity to think about their future and their past.

This activity is a variation of a classic activity used in youth HIV/AIDS prevention circles. It has been culturally adapted to better reach young Latinos.

**Note:** This activity is for high school groups only. In addition, the facilitator should be sensitive to the issues of gay/lesbian youth and marriage.

### Messages

- Behaviors during the teen years will impact a person for the rest of their life.
- Having sex with someone means they are also affected by your previous partners.

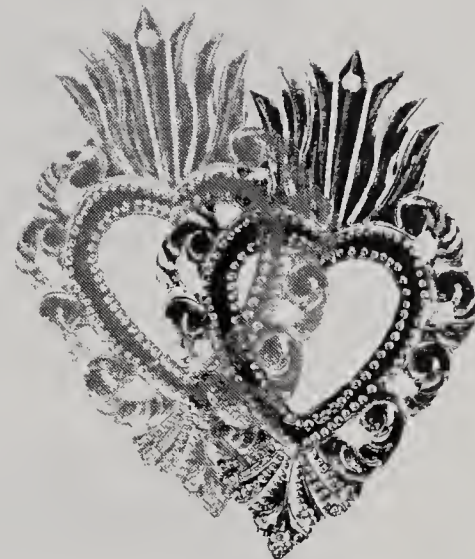
Group size: At least 24 people. This is an excellent activity for large groups of people, but no more than 50 if everyone is to have a role. The activity can also work if half the group is involved and the rest are the audience.

### Materials

- 25 large index cards
- Hole puncher
- Scissors
- Markers
- String or yarn
- A quilt or blanket
- Snack
- Chart tablet or blackboard
- Chart markers or chalk

### Preparation

On each index card, print the name of a character in the story. Cut the yarn or string into 20-inch pieces. Punch two holes on either side of the card and thread the yarn through the holes, tying the ends together. Make enough cards (and cut enough pieces of string) so that each person will have a character name. It's a good idea to make extras of certain characters, such as "Can't remember name" and "Suzy's partners." This will ensure that everyone will have a role to play. In addition, cards can be made for grandparents, siblings and aunts and uncles. Be creative!



### Staffing

One or two people

### Setup

Place the quilt or blanket on the floor. Set chairs around the quilt in a semicircle, allowing space for people to walk.

Place the snack near the back of the room to encourage people to come in and mingle.

Sort the name cards into two stacks, by gender: the boys with Miguel on the top and the girls with Ana María on the top.

### Welcome

Welcome everyone as they arrive and invite them to have a snack.

### Starting the activity

The facilitator should formally welcome the group. Do not explain the purpose of the activity. This will ensure that the youth will be able to experience the activity without any preconceived outcomes.

### Steps

- Ask for two volunteers, one boy and one girl, to come forward, and give them the Miguel and Ana María cards. Ask them to assist in passing out the remaining cards, one per person.
- Once everyone has received a card, explain that they will be a part of a group

of people, some of whom they have never met but each of whom will have an impact on the others' lives. Tell them that, as they hear their character's name, they should join the others on the quilt.

- Ask Ana María and Miguel to sit on the quilt facing the rest of the participants. Then continue by reading the story.

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## The Story/El Cuento

### Characters

- Miguel
- Ana María
- Javier
- Suzy
- Suzy's partners
- Tony
- Tony's partners
- Can't Remember Name
- Can't Remember Name's partners
- Valerie
- Clara
- Clara's boyfriend
- Clara's boyfriend's partners
- Ana María's family (parents, siblings, grandparents, *tías y tíos*)
- Miguel's family (parents, siblings, grandparents, *tías y tíos*)
- Others in the community

"Miguel and Ana María are very much in love. They have known each other for almost a year. Miguel is ready for the big night—he's going to ask Ana María to marry him. He has it all planned. He's going to go to her house, with his mother and father, to ask for her hand in marriage. He has the flowers and the ring, and he hopes with all his heart that she will say yes. After 26 years, he's finally found the one!

Miguel arrives at Ana María's house with his parents. His heart is pounding, his palms are sweating. Ana María invites them in, surprised to see Miguel's parents. She calls her parents to the living room and her mother gets some food for everyone to enjoy. Once they are sitting down, Miguel can't wait any longer.

"Señor y Señora Rodríguez, I come tonight with my heart in my hands. I love your daughter and I want to spend the rest of my life with her by my side. I promise to make her very happy. Please, *por favor*, will you grant me the honor of her hand in marriage?"



Ana María is ecstatic. Her mother has tears in her eyes, and her father is suitably grave. After a few minutes of questioning Miguel about his goals in life, permission is given and the real celebration begins.

That night, as Ana María and Miguel get ready for bed in their separate homes, they begin to think of their past experiences, of the people and the relationships they had before they met each other. [As each character's name is called, he or she should join Ana María and Miguel on the "bed."]

### **Ana María's story**

**Javier:** Ana María met her first love when she was a sophomore in high school. After dating for two months, they had sex for the first time. They broke up two weeks later.

**Sam:** Ana María met Sam her senior year in high school. At first he didn't pressure her to have sex. One night, Sam was at a party without Ana María and he was drinking heavily. He left the party with **Suzy** and they had unprotected sex. He did not know her sexual history, but later his friends said that she used drugs and liked to party [**Suzy's partners**]. Sam felt guilty and did not tell Ana María. Sam and Ana María became more sexually intimate over time. Two months after his one-night stand with Suzy, he noticed a sore on his genitals. He was diagnosed with syphilis and had to tell Ana María. She got medical care, but their relationship went bust because of lack of trust. Ana María left for college.

**Tony:** In her third year of college, Ana María met Tony. He was nice, and while he dated a lot, he had limited his sexual activity [**Tony's partners**]. After dating for one year, Tony proposed. They had sexual relations, but three months later Tony was killed in a car crash.

### **Miguel's story**

**Can't Remember Name and Can't Remember Name's partners:** As a freshman in high school, Miguel and his friends believed that they should have sex with whomever they could get, and having sex would make them men. Miguel dated lots of girls and had unprotected sex with at least four girls. He couldn't remember their names because he always met them at parties where there was a lot of drinking.

**Valerie:** Miguel met Valerie at the end of his sophomore year. By this time he was scared of getting a girl pregnant, so they did not have sexual intercourse, just genital contact. Now he knows that even this contact could have ended up in a pregnancy or an STD! Miguel dated Valerie until he went to college.

**Clara, Clara's boyfriend, Clara's boyfriend's partners:** During his first year of college, Miguel met Clara. Clara had a young child and did not know the sexual history of the father. They dated for a full year before having sex. Though they dated for two years, they decided finally to end the relationship.

### **¿Y ahora qué?**

Tonight, as Miguel and Ana María think about their past, they wonder how each of those relationships will affect their marriage. They now know that people can be infected with HIV for years before knowing it. They think about how this will affect their families. [**Ana María's and Miguel's families and others in the community** join the group, which is still gathered around the bed.] They are beginning to get worried about their past and their future.

### **La plática/charla**

Before participants return to their seats, the facilitator should ask them to look at the crowded bed. Had they ever imagined that so many people would connect to each other? Remind them that both Miguel and Ana María, though sexually active, had only a few partners each, yet 23 (or whatever the number is) people had joined them in their marriage bed.

The facilitator should invite everyone to find a comfortable seat. Some participants may choose to stay sitting on the floor, but it is important to make sure that everyone can see everyone else, allowing for full participation in the *charla*.

First, the facilitator should ask the participants what they felt as they heard the stories and watched people join Ana María and Miguel on their bed. What was going through their minds? This is a great opportunity to use a chart tablet to record participants' feelings and thoughts. Many times, people do not think of the others with whom their current partner has been. Other times, people are afraid they will seem rude, jealous or suspicious if they voice their concerns.

The facilitator can ask questions such as the following:

- Was the story realistic? Did it portray real-life situations?
- How do peer pressure, television shows, movies and music encourage a lifestyle that puts people at greater risk of contracting STDs and HIV/AIDS?
- What did Miguel and Ana María do that placed them at risk for STDs and HIV/AIDS? What should they do now?
- How will their knowledge affect their relationship and their family?

The facilitator should remind the participants that even though they are alone together in the bed, their family is always affected by the consequences of the activity, whether it is pregnancy, STDs or HIV/AIDS.

Finally, ask the participants to think about their own lifestyles and about their future. What are they doing today that is putting them at risk for their future?

### **La despedida**

Thank everyone for participating and invite them to the next session. Remind them that they do have choices, that they can choose to live, to start *una onda sana* in their life.





## What's in the Cards for Me?

Most young people do not fully understand how easily HIV/AIDS can spread through a community or how their behavior contributes to their vulnerability. This activity illustrates how easily HIV spreads from person to person.

This activity is a variation of a classic activity used in youth HIV/AIDS prevention circles. It has been culturally adapted to better reach young Latinos.

### Messages

- It is impossible to tell whether an individual is infected with HIV.
- Certain behaviors put a person at risk for infection.

Group size: 20 people.

### Materials

- 21 envelopes
- Index cards or construction paper (cut to index-card size) in the following colors and quantity:
  - 18 pink
  - 30 yellow
  - 54 blue
  - 24 white
- Chart tablet
- Markers
- Nametags
- Snack

### Preparation

Write instructions (see below for details) on slips of paper that will fit easily into the envelopes. Place six (6) index cards of the same color and one set of instructions in each envelope. Each color index card has a different set of instructions.

- In three envelopes, place six (6) pink cards and the following instructions:  
*Trade all but one of your cards.*

- In five envelopes, place six (6) yellow cards and the following instructions:  
*Trade all of your cards.*

- In nine envelopes, place six (6) blue cards and the following instructions:  
*Trade all but one of your cards.*

- In four envelopes, place six (6) white cards and the following instructions:  
*Do not trade any of your cards.*



### Space requirements

A comfortable meeting room with enough space and chairs for each person.

### Staffing

One person.

### Setup

Place the chairs in a circle where everyone can see each other. Place a table with the snacks at the back of the room.

### Welcome

The facilitator should greet everyone as they enter the room and invite them to have a snack and meet the new participants.

### Starting the activity

The facilitator should open the session by formally welcoming everyone to the group. Do not explain the purpose of the activity.

## Steps

- To begin, hand out the envelopes, making sure to keep one of the envelopes with the pink cards. Emphasize that this is just an activity, that it is not real.
- Once all of the envelopes have been distributed, ask the participants to take out their cards, fan them out and read the instructions, keeping them a secret from the others in the group. When the facilitator gives the signal, the participants should approach others in the group and ask each other three questions, such as name, their plans for the future and their favorite movie. After the information has been exchanged, they should trade their cards, following the instructions in the envelope.
- The facilitator should pressure the people with the white cards to trade a white card for a pink card. The people with the white cards are not allowed to trade any of their cards.
- Once everyone has completed their trading, ask everyone to take their seat, fan out their cards and see what colors they collected. Before the activity continues, it is very important to remind everyone that they are participating in an activity, that it is only play-acting.

### Pink cards

Begin by asking everyone who started with a pink card to stand up. Explain that the pink cards denote people who are HIV-positive.

Ask the others who are seated if they could tell that the people standing up were infected with HIV. Stress that most of the time, it is impossible to tell just by looking if a person is HIV-positive.

Next, ask those with the pink cards to read their instructions (“Trade all but one card”) and ask them why they needed to keep one card. The correct answer is that once a person has been infected with HIV, they will always be infected; there is no cure.

The next step is to ask all of the people with pink cards to stand up and explain that they are now infected with HIV. Spend some time discussing the feelings of the people who have become “infected.” How did they feel when they heard the news? How will it affect them? Who will they tell?

### Yellow cards

After everyone sits down again, ask everyone who started with yellow cards to stand. Explain to them that they represent the drug addicts who are willing to share their needles with others.

Next, ask everyone who has yellow cards to read their instructions (“Trade all of your cards”). Use this opportunity to discuss drug abuse and the risk factors associated with sharing needles.

Finally, ask the participants to look at their cards. Anyone not holding a pink card can sit down. These are the people who have not been infected with HIV, even though they engaged in a risky behavior, sharing needles with others.

### Blue cards

Next, ask the participants who started with blue cards to stand up. Ask them to read their instructions (“Trade all but one of your cards”). Explain that they are the group that represents “safer” sex (since there is no such thing as safe sex) and that if they do not have a pink card, they can sit down. Explain that those who now have a pink card may have become infected by having sex with a person who was HIV-positive, or, if they have a yellow card, by sharing needles. This is a great opportunity to have an open discussion about “safer” sex, including the use of condoms, delaying sex, etc.

### White cards

Finally, ask the group that started with the white cards and that continue to hold only white cards to stand. Ask them to read their instructions (“Do not trade any of your cards”). Explain that this group represents the



only ones guaranteed not to be HIV-positive. Ask the group to share the difficulties of saying no to trading cards even when they were pressured by friends.

### **La plática**

As with all activities, the follow-up discussion provides a way for the participants to discuss their feelings and to learn new information about the risky behaviors associated with HIV/AIDS. The facilitator should ask participants questions such as the following:

- What did you learn about the spread of HIV?

- What behaviors do you think would make you more vulnerable?
- What situations do you think are tricky/difficult or place you at risk for infection?
- What skills do you think you need to keep you safe?

### **La despedida**

The facilitator should thank all the participants and invite them to the next meeting and remind them that they are part of *la onda sana para el futuro*.



# Welcome, Welcome to the World

Everyone needs to feel that they are worth something, that someone loves them and is glad they were born. As they grow older, many youth do not hear the messages of love and hope that were common in the early years of their lives. Some youth have never had a mother, father or other adult tell them how special they are or how much they are loved. This activity is designed to remind each person that they are important and that there are people who care about them.

This activity should be done at the end of a session. After the activity is completed, everyone should leave without speaking to each other, taking the beautiful thoughts with them. The activity should be processed the next time the group meets.

## Messages

- Everyone is important and has a place in the community.
- Everyone is loved, and there is a person who cares.

Group size: Up to 20 people.

## Space requirements

A room large enough for two big circles.

## Materials

- Tape player or CD player
- Soothing music tape or CD

## Staffing

One person

## Setup

Place chairs in a circle in the center of the room. There should be enough chairs so that half the group can sit in the circle.



## Starting the activity

The facilitator should ask participants to think of a time when they felt loved and cherished, and felt that they belonged in the community. This may be difficult for a few people, as some youth have not felt that way for a long time. The facilitator should explain that one of the most important needs human beings have is that of belonging, of feeling they are loved. Sometimes, because of situations at home, some youth choose risky behaviors to fill the void. If possible, the facilitator should encourage participants to discuss their feelings and explain that the activity is designed to take them back to a time when they were very young, to the day that they were born. The facilitator should ask the participants to divide into two groups: the first one should sit in the chairs in the circle, and the second group should stand on the outside of the circle. The facilitator should also provide all of the instructions before the activity begins:

The people sitting down represent newborn babies, while those standing are the parents, friends and grandparents who are waiting to greet the new baby. The facilitator may wish



to dim the lights and play some quiet music. Ask the “babies” to close their eyes and just listen to the voices. Each “adult” will walk around the circle, whispering into their ears the first thing you might say to a newborn—beautiful thoughts such as “I’m so glad you were born; I’ve been waiting for you; you are so special. I can’t wait to see what wonderful things you’ll do; you are loved.”

As the “adults” go around the circle, the “babies” receive the wishes and love. After everyone is done, the facilitator should quietly ask the two groups to change places, and the

“adults” now become the “babies” and receive words of love.

After everyone has had a turn to be a baby and an adult, the facilitator should quietly say good-bye.

This is a very emotional experience for some people, and the facilitator should be aware that the participants might need to stay for a few moments to compose themselves. It is very important that the facilitator spend time during the following meeting discussing the emotions that emerged during the activity.



## What Were You Thinking?

Almost every adult can think back to their youth and remember a time when they put themselves at risk. Sometimes it was a need to “fit in,” to be part of the crowd, while other times one simply did not understand the danger inherent in an activity. Youth today face similar situations with even greater consequences.

### Messages

- Many times, a simple situation can turn risky; therefore, it is important to always think about the consequences.
- Listen to the inner voice that warns of danger.

Group size: Up to 20.

### Materials

Pens or pencils  
Large index cards  
Bowl or other container  
Nametags  
Chart tablet or blackboard  
Chart markers or chalk  
Snacks

### Preparation

On each index card, write a common scene where the potential for engaging in risky behaviors is high. Below are some ideas, but the facilitator may wish to use other scenes that are specific to concerns or activities taking place in the community. Another option is to ask the youth to create the scenes themselves:

- Your best friend wants to see her boyfriend (who is four years older), but her mother has told her that she can’t go by herself. Your friend asks if you can go with her, and you agree. Once you get to her boyfriend’s house, she asks you to go to another room with his best friend

because she wants to be alone with her boyfriend. You go with the best friend and find yourself in a bedroom. What happens now?

- Your parents are away for the weekend and you decide to invite your three best friends to the house to kick back, listen to music and eat pizza. Five girls show up at your house with beer and dope. Your friends are ecstatic. What do you do?
- It’s summer and everyone meets at the local park to sit around and talk. It’s boring, but there’s not much else to do. One night, some older kids show up and invite everyone to their house. What do you do?
- Your best friend is driving the car and lights up a joint. What do you do?
- You are at a party, and all around you, your friends are trying the latest drugs and mixing them with alcohol. You want to be cool, but you’re scared. What do you do?
- You are sitting with a group of students in the cafeteria and a new student comes in. One of your friends makes a derogatory comment about homosexuals directed at the new student. How would you handle this situation? What would you say to your friend?
- You go with your new boyfriend/girlfriend to the movies, and later you are both sitting in the car. He/she wants to go all the way. You don’t want to, but he’s/she’s pressuring you. What do you do?
- Your best friend comes over to spend the night and when you are changing you notice bruises on her breasts and back. You ask her about the bruises and she tells you her boyfriend hit her. What do you do?



## Space requirements

A comfortable room with chairs and tables, plus space that can serve as a kind of stage.

## Staffing

Two people

## Setup

The tables and chairs should be arranged in an open rectangle, with the stage at the open end. A table near the door can hold the nametags and other materials, while a table in the back of the room can hold the snack. This will encourage the young people to enter the room and move away from the entrance.

## Welcome

As each person arrives, the facilitator should greet everyone individually. If the youth do not know each other, they should be invited to introduce themselves while they are enjoying the snack. One of the staff may need to help facilitate introductions. Allow about 10 minutes for youth to become comfortable with each other and the setting.

## Starting the activity

The facilitator should formally welcome the group and begin the activity by asking participants to think about the last time they got that “uh-oh” feeling, the one that meant they might be in trouble. The facilitator should explain that the youth will have the opportunity to act out some of these moments, in some common scenes. The facilitator may wish to explain improvisational acting and note that there are no right ways to create the scene. Each youth should react to the situation as they see fit.

## Steps

- Place all of the index cards with scenes in the bowl.
- Invite a youth to reach into the bowl and pull out a scene. The youth then can call on others to help to act out the scene. Participants may need to move chairs or



tables to help create a car or other site, depending on the scene.

- The rest of the participants should act as if they are the audience.
- As time allows, continue drawing from the bowl. This activity may take place over two or three meetings.

## La plática

At the conclusion of each scene the facilitator should encourage everyone to discuss what happened. Some questions to consider include the following:

- How did the person end up in a situation that became risky?
- What could they have done to prevent it?
- What should they do if they find themselves in a similar situation?
- Who can they turn to for help? Encourage the youth to think of adults they could call on to help them.
- Has this ever happened to any of the participants?
- What other skills do they need to help them avoid risky situations?

## La despedida

The facilitator should end the session by thanking the youth for their honesty and for sharing their feelings and knowledge with each other.



Peer pressure is a part of every youth's life. Every day, youth must find a balance between their wishes and the need to fit in. Unfortunately, this can lead to situations where they feel that the only way to avoid ridicule is to go along with the crowd. This activity will encourage youth to practice words and actions that may help them stay healthy.

## Messages

- Making the decision to stay healthy can be very hard.
- There is always a choice.

Group size: Up to 30.

## Materials

- Pens or pencils
- Nametags
- Chart tablet or blackboard
- Chart markers or chalk
- Snacks

## Preparation

Using the chart tablet, the facilitator should write one of the following messages (or other similar statements) on one sheet of paper and then post the sheets around the room. Youth can also write their own lines.

- Come on, you know I love you. If you really loved me, you would do it.
- Come on, baby, you know I don't like wearing those. It just doesn't feel as good.
- Aw, come on, don't be a chicken, everybody's doin' it.
- If you want to join us, you have to try it. It's only once—what's the danger?
- All the cool kids are doing it—let's try it.
- If you're really my friend, you'll come with me.

## Space requirements

A comfortable room with chairs and tables plus plenty of wall space or easels for posting the chart tablet paper

## Staffing

Two people

## Setup

The chairs should be arranged in an open circle (three or four chairs) in front of each posted sheet of paper. A table near the door can hold the nametags and other materials, while a table in the back of the room can hold the snack. This will encourage youth to enter the room and move away from the entrance.

## Welcome

As participants arrive, the facilitator should greet them individually. If the youth do not know each other, they should be invited to introduce themselves while they are enjoying the snack. One of the staff may need to help facilitate introductions. Allow about 10 minutes for the youth to become comfortable with each other and the setting.

## Starting the activity

The facilitator should formally welcome the group and begin the activity by asking participants to break into groups of three or four and to move to one of the circles. To make this task easier, the facilitator may wish to give each participant a number that corresponds to a number on the tablet paper.

The facilitator should explain that each of the statements represents a moment in time when everyone must make a decision: follow the crowd and possibly engage in a behavior that puts them at risk, or decide not to participate. Their task is to write as many responses as they can that will keep them out of the situation. Each group should elect a scribe, and the facilitator should set a time limit of five minutes for this portion of the activity.



After the groups get started, the facilitator may wish to walk through the groups and listen to the discussions. Some groups may need assistance in getting the discussion going.

After five minutes, each group should report on their responses. One way to do this is to ask the youth to act out the activity, including the response. If they wish to, each group can vote on their three favorite responses.

After all of the groups have reported their responses, the facilitator should explain that, in situations like the ones discussed, the best defense is to practice saying “No, thank you” or whatever response works best. The facilitator may ask for volunteers to act out the scenario.

Finally, the participants and the facilitator should create a list of ways to decline invitations to risky situations.

### **La plática**

At the conclusion, the facilitator should invite youth to share their feelings about the activity and what other things they could do to help avoid precarious situations. The facilitator should also remind the students that females as well as males could try to pressure them into risky situations.

### **La despedida**

The facilitator should end the session by thanking the youth for their honesty and for sharing their feelings and knowledge with each other.





## Fast and Snappy

This activity is a variation on Say WHAT? that provides youth with the opportunity to practice responses to “same old lines,” the lines used by others to encourage them to participate in unsafe activities.

Note: This activity is best suited for high school groups. If younger students will participate, the facilitator should be careful about the “same lines” used.

### Messages

- Making the decision to stay healthy can be very hard.
- There is always a choice.

Group size: Up to 20.

### Materials

- Pens or pencils
- Nametags
- Index cards (blue and pink-or any two colors)
- Markers
- Snacks

### Staffing

Two people.

### Space requirements

A comfortable room with chairs, plus plenty of wall space or easels for posting the chart tablet paper.

### Setup

The chairs should be arranged in an open circle. A table near the door can hold the nametags and other materials, while a table in the back of the room can hold the snack. This will encourage the young people to enter the room and move away from the entrance.

### Preparation

The facilitator should write one of the following Same Old Lines—so called because they are the same ones used by every generation—or one of the responses to the Same Old Lines (and other similar statements), on each index card. There should be enough cards so that each student has at least one same line or response.

#### Same Old Lines (on pink cards):

- Come on baby, you know I love you. If you really loved me, you would do it.
- Come on, babe, you know I don't like wearing those. It just doesn't feel as good.
- Aw, come on, don't be a chicken, everybody's doin' it.
- If you want to join us, you have to try it. It's only once—what's the danger?
- Everyone's doing it, let's try it.
- If you're really my friend, you'll come with me.
- You know I was tested last month. What's the danger?
- You can't get pregnant doin' it just once!
- Come on, I'm the only one that's used this needle!
- Your parents won't ever find out.
- Of course I'll still respect you.
- Don't you want to feel like an adult?
- Six beers isn't that much!



### Responses (on blue cards):

- No, thank you. (Keep repeating this as many times as necessary.)
- If you really loved me, you wouldn't pressure me.
- No, I respect myself.
- No, thanks. I'm high on life.
- Thanks, but I don't like it.
- I don't have to do that to feel like an adult.
- I don't want to get pregnant or anything else.
- It's either a condom or nothing.
- No glove, no love.
- Sorry, I have goals and plans and they don't include pregnancy or diseases.
- No response, just walk away.
- That's not cool.
- Jeez, I thought you were smarter than that!

### Welcome

As participants arrive, the facilitator should greet them individually. If the youth do not know each other, they should be invited to introduce themselves while they are enjoying the snack. One of the staff may need to help facilitate introductions. Allow about 10 minutes for youth to become comfortable with each other and the setting.

### Starting the activity

The facilitator should formally welcome the group and begin the activity by asking the participants to think of a time when they made a decision because they were pressured by



their friends or others and they didn't want to feel "uncool." The facilitator can ask the youth if they wish to share an experience.

The facilitator should then explain that sometimes it's easier to say no if a person has practiced how to refuse. The facilitator should divide the group into two and pass out the index cards randomly, pinks (Same Old Lines) to one group and blues (Responses) to the other group.

The facilitator should ask someone from the pink group to read their card to the blue group, and then each of the appropriate responses should be read out loud.

### Variation 1

A variation on this activity is that each group creates their own Same Old Lines and Responses and then moves around the room practicing the lines. Each group should take turns saying the Same Old Lines and responding to them.

### Variation 2

A second variation is that each participant is provided with a sheet of paper divided or folded in half. "Same Old Lines" is written at the top of one side of the paper, and "Responses" is written at the top of the other side. The facilitator should allow about five

minutes for the students to write as many Same Old Lines and Responses as they can. Then the facilitator can ask the students to try the lines and responses out on each other. To finish the activity, the facilitator should ask the youth to share some of the lines and responses and write them on a chart tablet or chalkboard.

### **La plática**

At the conclusion of the practice session, the facilitator should invite youth to share their feelings about the activity and what other things they could do to help avoid precarious situations. The facilitator should also remind the participants that females as well as males could try to pressure them into risky situations.

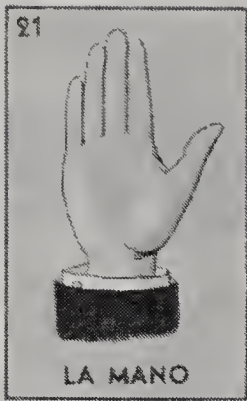
### **La despedida**

The facilitator should end the session by thanking the youth for their honesty and for sharing their feelings and knowledge with each other, and should encourage them to keep practicing their snappy responses.

### **Final thoughts**

The facilitator can keep this activity alive by creating a notebook or an index card display that keeps track of the lines and responses that youth hear.





# 6

## Special Events for Community Education

### El día de los muertos

*Onda Sana* emphasizes the importance of young people making healthy choices and how their choices can lead to life or death. *El día de los muertos* can be used as one of *Onda Sana's* community outreach strategies to focus attention on the somber reality of how risky behaviors can lead to death. This special holiday can provide a forum for young people to create an atmosphere where family members and others in the community can talk about taboo topics.

In Mexico and the United States, *El día de los muertos*, or Day of the Dead, begins at midnight on November 1 and continues through November 2. The purpose of the day is to honor friends and relatives who have died. November 1, All Saints Day, and November 2, All Souls Day, are marked throughout Mexico, Ecuador and other Latin American countries by intriguing customs that vary widely from region to region. Some indigenous groups in Mexico set aside November 1 to remember deceased infants and children, often referred to as *angelitos* or little angels, while November 2 honors adults.



### Messages

- Youth have an important place and play an important role in our community.
- Youth's choices and actions have an affect on their families and community.
- Youth need to have access to correct information in order to make informed choices.
- Parents and other family members need to be open to discussing traditionally taboo issues with their children.
- Communicate with the ones you love.
- The youth voice is powerful—listen!

### History

Many Mexican and Latin American people of indigenous heritage believe that each year, on

*El día de los muertos*, the souls of their departed relatives return to share a feast with the living. Long before the Aztecs built a civilization in the Valley of Mexico, the people of Central America and Mexico held special ceremonies for the dead. The Aztecs, who came into the Valley of Mexico in about 1325, inherited many traditions from these ancient cultures. They believed that



spirits in the afterworld could influence what happened to them on earth and that the spirits could act as messengers to the gods.

For the Aztecs, the way a person died determined what kind of an afterlife he would have. For instance, when a person died a natural death he entered *Mictlan*, or the place of the dead, to embark on a long and difficult journey through nine levels of the underworld. When babies and little children died they went to a place called *Chichihuacuauhco*, where an immense tree fed the children by dripping milk from its branches.

These ancient beliefs developed into celebrations for the dead. During each month, festivals called *veintenas* were held in honor of the gods. These early *veintenas* gave rise to the celebrations of *El día de los muertos*, a time for the spirits to return to visit their family and friends. It was a time for the dead to feast on their favorite foods, to hear the music that once made them happy and to be with the people they loved.

When the Spanish *conquistadores* arrived on the Mexican peninsula in the 1500s, they brought Christianity with them.

Coincidentally, the Aztecs celebrated a festival for the dead at the same time of year as the Catholic celebrations of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. These Catholic traditions were combined with the *veintenas*. This resulted in a blending of ancient Indian customs with the religious beliefs of Catholic Christianity that continues to this day.

### Activities

Numerous activities can be planned by youth as an outreach strategy to convey the message of making healthy choices to the greater community. Some of these activities may begin three or four weeks before the event; they might end with *El desfile de Catrina*, a Dead Dreams performance or Drive-By *Calacas* on November 2. The following activities are described in detail later in this chapter:

- Dead Dreams
- *Calaca* Tableaux and Drive-By *Calacas*
- *Altars*
- *Corrido* Competitions or Poetry Slams
- Silent Auction
- *El desfile de Catrina*

### The media

Media must be involved from the start. Ask a television station and a radio station to help sponsor the event. Use media wisely: promote the event on local talk shows, early morning newscasts and radio, and in print publications. Ask celebrities or local officials to write newspaper op-ed pieces or do PSAs about the importance of HIV/AIDS awareness in the Latino community. Invite parents and youth to be interviewed for newspapers, radio or television.

### Getting started

The first step is to plan the activities with the youth who are already involved in *Onda Sana*. Spend time with them discussing the options, the time involved and their ability to carry out the various events. Youth may want to plan new events or come up with their own ideas. The coordinator's job is to serve as a helper to the youth as they carry out the details for the events. Designing an *El día de los muertos* activity provides youth with a sense of purpose, a place in the community and a validation of the importance of their role in preventing HIV/AIDS.

### Final note

Because the special events in *Onda Sana* have been created so that they are flexible enough to incorporate everyone's beliefs and lifestyles, these activities can also be tailored for use during World AIDS Day. Because not all Latino groups celebrate *El día de los muertos*, some youth/adults may not feel comfortable using the traditions associated with the day. Facilitators will need to explain the meaning behind the celebration and how it will be used to highlight the issues of HIV/AIDS and risky behaviors before planning the activities.



## Dead Dreams

Everyone has dreams about what they want for the future: a better job, to get married, to be the best musician or even to make a million dollars. Children and youth always are asked the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Most can answer, even if it’s only to get out of the place in which they find themselves.

But what happens when a person is infected with HIV/AIDS? How do these dreams change?

Using performance art, children and youth can explore what happens when someone makes unhealthy choices—unprotected sex, sharing needles, etc.—and how these choices can kill dreams.

Performance art is like a play that can be created by individuals writing about their personal experiences and then performing them on stage or in an area where audiences can watch. Performance art is an excellent vehicle for getting the message across to a large group of people.

### Messages

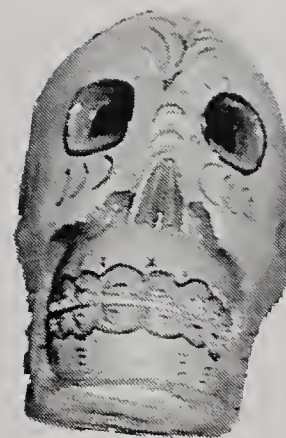
- Everyone has dreams for the future, but choosing risky behaviors may kill those dreams.
- Everyone in the community is a part of the solution for the problem of HIV/AIDS.
- Even though adults may find it hard to talk about this topic, it is important that adults, children and youth discuss making healthy choices.

### Timeline

This activity should begin three to four weeks before the *El día de los muertos* event on November 2.

### Materials

- Writing materials or computers
- Glow-in-the-dark paint that can be used to paint skeleton bones onto black tights and T-shirts
- Black tights, black T-shirts and other clothes that can be used to make costumes for the live *calacas* (*calacas* are the skeletons and scenes created about a person who died and an event surrounding that person’s life)
- Vaseline or vegetable oil
- Small strips of dry plaster fabric (check your local hobby or art supply store)
- Paint, feathers, glitter, rhinestones, fabric, hats, glue, glue gun, scissors, wood, nails, hammer, poster board; depending on how elaborate the sets become, it may be necessary to arrange for wood and other building materials



### Space requirements

A room large enough to be able to move around, tables for writing, space where costumes can be made and for rehearsals to take place. Space will depend on the number of young people involved in this activity.

It will be necessary to arrange for a theater-type space for the performance.

### Partners and sponsors

To be successful, a team of people must help organize and manage the event. Invite a cultural arts center curator, folk artist, writer or others interested in assisting in the project to provide expert assistance. Make sure they understand that the youth are in charge: adults often want to take an event over to “make it perfect.”

Work with local businesses for donations of materials, especially building materials for sets.

### **Staffing**

The coordinator's role in this activity is to serve as a helper—providing support for youth as they plan and carry out the activity, helping find the donations and serving as the point person. It will be necessary for other adults to assist in the creation of the play, the construction of sets and other activities.

### **Setup**

- Set chairs in a circle
- Find a rehearsal space—a stage or other open area
- Arrange tables for making costumes
- Make sure you have access to a “messy” area with water and sinks for cleanup

### **Getting started**

Use one of the activities in Chapter 5 to begin the discussion on making healthy choices, such as *¿Qué puedes perder?*, *La cama del matrimonio* or What's in the Cards for Me? Discuss with youth what happens when someone has AIDS, how their dreams could die. Explain that they will create a performance around the idea of “What I could have been had my dreams not died . . .”

The young people can work with a local writer, English teacher or other interested adult to develop their performance art piece, which can be the culmination of an *El día de los muertos* event. During the performance youth will become live *calacas* talking about their dead dreams and what they could have been had they made better, more informed choices.

### **Steps**

- Have a discussion with the students
- Plan for the performance
- Write the script
- Design and create the costumes
- Find and secure the performance site
- Design sets
- Create posters, flyers and press releases or PSAs to advertise the performance
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!
- Hold the performance
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the performance

### **Making the masks**

Masks should be made in teams of two, as follows:

- First, rub vaseline or vegetable oil onto the skin so the plaster will not stick to the face.
- Dip the small strips of dry plaster fabric in water and moisten them; apply them to your partner's face one by one, taking care to leave an opening for the nose and eyes.
- As the plaster dries, the mask will begin to get warm to the touch. After the material cools, the plaster can be gently pried from the face.
- The mask is now ready to be painted and decorated with anything.

### **Resource**

Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith, *Day of the Dead: A Mexican-American Celebration* (New York: Holiday House, 1994)



## Calaca Tableaux

Throughout the Southwest, *calacas* have become a form of folk art and a symbol of *El día de los muertos*. Handmade and sold in stores throughout the year, *calacas* are a tongue-in-cheek look at life and death. *Calacas* are usually made in small shadow boxes and depict everyday scenes—weddings, friends drinking together in a bar, a family taking the baby for a walk in the park. Sometimes they portray famous people such as Marylyn Monroe, Frieda Kahlo or a political figure. The “people,” though, are skeletons made out of papier mâché. Some *calacas* also include a poem that explains the scene, the people and what happened to them.

*Calaca* tableaux are an excellent vehicle for sparking conversations among community members, especially if they are placed in storefronts, schools, churches, clinics and community centers. The *calacas* can be as small as a shoebox—or youth can use mannequins to make life-sized *calacas*.

### Objective

The goal of this activity is to give young people an opportunity to discuss and use their artistic talent to create *calacas*—skeletons in scenes—that encourage other youth to make wise choices.

### Messages

- Everyone can choose to live by making healthy choices.
- Everyone in the community is a part of the solution for the problem of HIV/AIDS.
- Even though adults may find it hard to talk about this topic, it is important that adults, children and youth discuss making healthy choices.

### Timeline

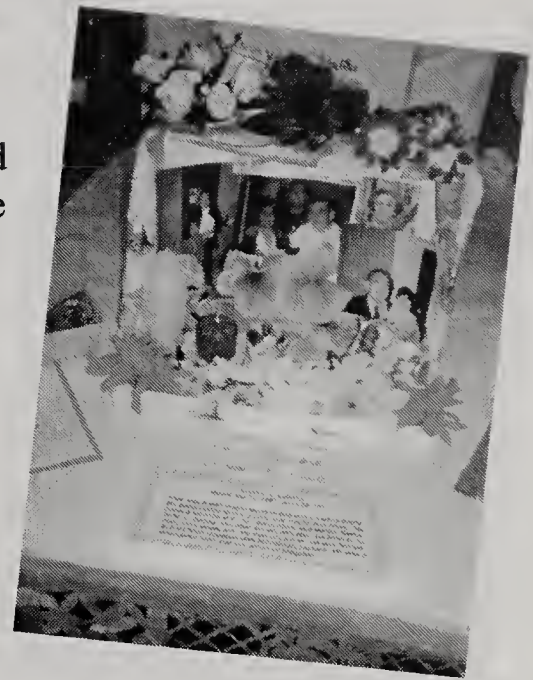
This activity should take place approximately one month before *El día de los muertos* and lead to a *calacas* display in storefronts.

### Space

#### requirements

The facilitator should plan for a space large enough to hold a discussion group and with tables and storage space to design and make *calaca* tableaux.

After the initial planning meeting, the facilitator and youth will need to meet with storeowners to plan the display. If there aren't any storefronts available, consider partnering with an art gallery, restaurant or other venue.



### Materials

- Cardboard boxes (such as shoeboxes)
- Wood, nails and hammer
- Paints, brushes and markers
- Strips of dry plaster fabric
- Newspaper, construction paper, etc.
- Glue, yarn, cotton balls, glitter, rhinestones, feathers, fabric scraps, stones, rocks, wire, etc.
- Glue sticks and glue gun
- Clothes (if using life-sized mannequins)

### Partners and sponsors

Invite businesses and organizations to participate in this event by allowing *calaca* tableaux to be displayed in their storefronts. This can be a two-day event. Businesses can also donate clothing, mannequins and materials to make the *calacas*, as well as a space to create the artwork. Other partners include art galleries, restaurants and community centers.

### Location, location, location

The event should take place in an area with many storefronts where displays can be placed for viewing.



### **Staffing**

It is important that an adult be available to discuss the importance of making wise choices with youth and how those choices can impact lives in a negative or positive way. The role of the adult is that of facilitator, providing youth with the materials and support they need to complete the activity.

### **Setup**

Tables and chairs should be set up with the materials in bins for easy access. Create an area with a *calaca* display—either photographs or a real *calaca*.

### **Starting the activity**

- The facilitator should begin with one of the activities from Chapter 5. Encourage youth to think about how people's behavior can affect what happens to them.
- After the game, the facilitator should explain the purpose of the *calacas* and how the group is going to use them to help the community learn about making healthy choices.
- The facilitator may need to break the group into small teams, each of which will create a *calaca*. After everyone is paired off, ask the youth to start thinking of the scene they would like to create and the materials they will need. Ask them to make a list of the materials, where they will find them and which materials they will need help procuring. Set a deadline by which the *calacas* will be completed, as well as a schedule for when the youth can meet to work on their individual *calacas*.

### **Finding the display site**

The facilitator should ask for volunteers to work on a committee that will secure the storefronts or another display site. Plan for approximately 15 storefronts, with each hosting *calaca* tableaux. Every storefront should have information promoting good choices and awareness of the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention.

- Work with the youth to decide on the perfect place for the walk-by viewing.
- Draft a letter to merchants explaining the purpose of the activity, the importance to the community and the benefit to their store (increased traffic on that evening).
- Draw up a list of possible stores.
- Brainstorm a list of people who could assist in securing the storefronts—the mayor, health commissioner, superintendent and business or community leaders. The youth should also write a letter and phone each person to ask for their support and assistance.

### **The big day**

The culmination of the activity is the walk-by or drive-by viewing of the *calaca* art: the community is invited on *El día de los muertos* to stroll down the block (or blocks) and view the youth's work. Youth can stand at strategic places to hand out materials or discuss the artwork, with everyone gathering at the last *calaca* for a reception with music and food. This activity can be combined with *El desfile de Catrina* and Dead Dreams.



The altar, or *ofrenda* (offering), is a place of honor for the departed souls of relatives and friends. When they return for their yearly visit, they will find things on the altar that they remember, such as a photograph, a favorite food or an article of clothing. Traditional foods such as tamales, mole and atole are also prepared for the *ofrenda*. An altar may be made at the home and at the gravesite of the loved one.

Reeds are tied together to make the arch over the altar. Its shape represents a sacred opening and frames the *ofrenda*. The arch is decorated with real flowers such as marigolds and with blossoms made from bright-colored tissue paper, or *papel picado*. Marigolds, the symbolic flower of the dead, have a special meaning in the celebration. In Mexico, this flower is called *cempazúchil*. Other items used to decorate the altar are papier-mâché skull masks, or *calaveras*, musical instruments, paper flowers, candles, incense made from copal, candy skulls and other decorative items. The offerings are laid out in an artistic and creative fashion. The smell of burning copal and the light of numerous candles are intended to help the departed find their way.

While death is a topic largely avoided in the United States, the remembrance of deceased ancestors and loved ones is traditional among diverse cultures around the world and is often marked by lighting candles or lamps and setting out offerings. Such celebrations can be traced back as far as the glory days of ancient Egypt, when departed souls were honored during the great festival of Osiris.

## Objective

The goal of this activity is to involve the community in holding discussions about what HIV/AIDS is, how it can be prevented and how to have open discussions with one's children about this topic, culminating in creating altars to honor those who have died of AIDS.

The altars should be displayed in the storefronts.

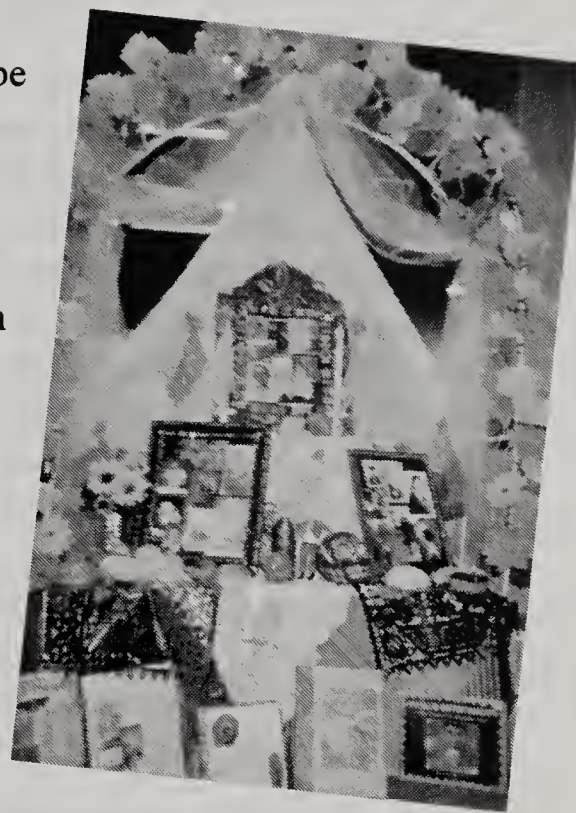
## Timeline

The discussion can begin a week before the event, and the altars can be set up on November 1.

## Space

### requirements

An area large enough to hold a community discussion for adults and youth, as well as an area where people can come together in small groups to discuss and create their altars.



## Materials

- HIV/AIDS print materials in English and Spanish
- Optional: clips from *My World* by Jamie Morales (on the *Onda Sana* CD-Rom), as well as computer and LCD panel
- Examples of what an altar can look like, as well as photos of altars
- Candles, copal, marigolds, *pan de muerto*, photos, tablecloth, assorted fruits and food, etc.
- Refreshments such as punch and *pan de muerto*

## Staffing

It is important that adults and youth be available to discuss HIV/AIDS prevention and how parents can go about having open discussions with their children about this topic.

## Partners and sponsors

To be successful, a team of people must help organize and manage the event. Form a com-



mittee of people who are interested in and/or have knowledge and understanding of *El día de los muertos*, HIV and Latinos, such as nonprofit organizations that are youth- and culture-focused and/or focused on HIV issues; cultural arts centers; community theater groups; artists; poets; writers; children's museums; churches; public schools; public libraries; community clinics; and senior citizens' homes. Each organization or group can be responsible for sponsoring or creating their own altars honoring someone who has died of AIDS, can help to prepare *El desfile de Catrina*—a parade, or can sponsor booths where young Latinos can create *calaca* tableaux, in which youth make scenes with skeletons that encourage young people to make wise choices.

Invite businesses and organizations within a two-block area to participate in this event by allowing altars and/or the *calaca* tableaux to be displayed in their storefronts, or by sponsoring activities to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. This can be a two-day event. Businesses can also donate T-shirts for a silent auction in which young artists will design shirts to promote the concept of "choosing to live." The monies can be donated to your organization's *Onda Sana* program to promote HIV/AIDS prevention activities throughout the year.

### **Items to budget for**

Budget items are dependent on the planned activities and sponsors and whether the event will take place over one or two days.

### **Location, location, location**

The event should take place in an area with many storefronts where displays can be viewed and activities can take place, and where Latinos frequently gather. The activities can begin on November 1 with discussions about making choices and talking about taboo topics. The discussions can lead to the creation of the *calacas*, which will be displayed

in the storefronts along with altars the community has created, and end on November 2 with *El desfile de Catrina*, a silent auction, poetry and a theater piece.

### **Staffing the event**

The number of volunteers required will be determined by the size of the event and the number of activities.

Usually, 40 to 50 volunteers are needed to build, set up and decorate the area(s): 1 or 2 people per storefront to assist, 30 people to clean up, 2 people to work with the media, 2 or 3 people to handle celebrities and entertainers, and 3 people to handle the logistics and keep everything running smoothly.

### **Setup**

- Chairs
- Two tables for refreshments
- One table for altar display
- Eight round tables for small group discussions

### **Starting the activity**

This activity begins with a discussion with adults from the community about what HIV/AIDS is. They can watch a video about Jamie, a young woman who has been impacted by the disease. The facilitators then lead a discussion about the video and how they felt watching Jamie tell her remarkable story. Adults might talk about ways to have open discussions with their children about HIV/AIDS prevention.

The facilitator can then lead a discussion about building a community altar honoring those in the community who have died of AIDS. This altar should be prepared on November 1 at one of the storefronts participating in the *El día de los muertos* event. The facilitator should describe what an altar is and the basics of putting an altar together. A list of necessary items and tasks will be posted on



the wall so that participants can sign up to help prepare the altar or bring items to place on the altar.

The list might include some of the following:

- Table for the altar
- Tablecloth for the altar
- An arch made of marigolds
- Marigolds for the altar
- Candles
- Candleholders
- Photos for the altar or items representing those who have died
- *Pan de muerto*
- Sugar skulls
- Copal and copal holder
- Matches
- Mole and other foods and drinks that were favorites of the departed
- Poems, stories and songs about the departed





## Corrido Competitions / Poetry Slams

### Objective

The goal of this activity is to give young people an opportunity to write a *corrido* or poem about other young people who have lost their lives and the decisions they made that may have led to that loss. A *corrido* is traditionally a ballad or ode set to music commemorating someone for the life they led, whether good or bad, and how they met their destiny.

### Timeline

The deadline for entering the competition or slam will be a week before the event; the competition or slam will take place on the evening of November 1.

### Space requirements

A space large enough to hold a *corrido* competition and/or poetry slam with an audience, and three to four judges from the community, such as teachers, community artists, writers or musicians.

### Materials

- The young people's *corridos* or poems
- Pencils, paper, tables and chairs for the judges
- Prizes, donated by sponsors, for the winners
- Microphone
- Lights

### Staffing

The host of the event could be a local celebrity; three to four judges will be required, as well as one or two tech people to make sure microphones work and a video person to tape the event for documentation.

### Setup

- Set up microphones
- Set up lights
- Set up tables and chairs for judges

- If necessary, arrange chairs for audience
- Place a camcorder where it can capture performers delivering their poems or *corridos*

### Starting the activity

A public announcement can be made to community centers, clinics, cultural arts centers and the general public that a *corrido* competition or poetry slam will take place on the evening of November 1; this event can be dedicated to *los angelitos*, so the songs or poems should be about someone the youth knew who died young based on the choices they made. Collect donations or sponsorships so that prizes can be given to the winners of the competition.

Allow the winners to perform their *corrido* or poem at the end of the opening festivities of the *El día de los muertos* event, or as a way to open *El desfile de Catrina*.

### Partners and sponsors

To be successful, a team of people must help organize and manage the event. Form a committee of people who are interested in and/or have knowledge and understanding of *El día de los muertos*, HIV and Latinos, such as nonprofit organizations that are youth- and culture-focused and/or focused on HIV issues; cultural arts centers; community theater groups; artists; poets; writers; children's museums; churches; public schools; public libraries; community clinics; and senior citizens' homes.

### Items to budget for

Budget items are dependent on the planned activities and sponsors, and whether the event will cover one or two days.



*Calavera* is Spanish for skull. *Calaveras* traditionally are poems or stanzas of four lines with rhymes at the end of alternating lines. In the poems, death has the last laugh as it delivers the barbed punch line at the end of the poem. The form originated in Spain about 500 years ago as a way of poking fun at royalty and other people in positions of power. The *conquistadores* brought this poetic form to the new world, where it found fertile ground in Mexico. *Calaveras* are still used to poke fun, but mostly at public figures such as politicians or famous people, never at dead people.

## Objective

The goal of this activity is to give people from the community an opportunity to write and submit *calaveras* about a public figure who could have made better choices, to be published in a booklet and distributed at the *El día de los muertos* event.

## Timeline

The deadline for submitting the *calavera* to be published in the *El día de los muertos* book should be at least one to two weeks before the event.

## Space requirements

A location where the *calaveras* can be mailed or delivered, and if necessary where the books can be assembled.

## Materials

- *Calaveras*
- Paper for copying
- A list of sponsors of the activity
- Display boards, glue, felt, glitter, etc.

## Staffing

This project will require adults and young people to arrange the *calaveras* in some type of order and to assist with copying and assembling the booklets. Someone will also need to design the cover for the booklet and display boards.

## Setup

- An area where *calaveras* can be stored, prepared for the booklet and assembled
- Tables and chairs for those assisting with the project
- Display areas to promote the booklets



## Starting the activity

A public announcement can be made to community centers, clinics, cultural arts centers and the general public that the organization is requesting *calaveras* from the community to be published in a booklet that will be distributed at the *El día de los muertos* event.

Collect donations or sponsorships so that sponsors can pay for printing and assembly costs.

## Partners and sponsors

To be successful, a team of people must help organize and manage the event. Form a committee of people who are interested in and/or have knowledge and understanding of *El día de los muertos*, HIV and Latinos, such as non-profit organizations that are youth- and culture-focused and/or focused on HIV issues; cultural arts centers; community theater groups; artists; poets; writers; children's museums; churches; public schools; public libraries; community clinics; and senior citizens' homes.

## Items to budget for

Printing and assembly costs, which will be dependent on how many *calaveras* are submitted for publication and how many copies of the booklet are created.



# Silent Auction

## Objective

The goal of this activity is to give young artists an opportunity to work with local artists to design T-shirts that depict a message about choosing to live.

## Timeline

The timeline for creating the T-shirts is approximately one to three months before the auction.

The T-shirts should be completed and delivered to the storefront or gallery hosting the auction by October 31 in order for the host to have time to display the T-shirts and the silent auction forms. The auction will take place on the evening of November 2.

## Space requirements

A storefront or gallery large enough to host the auction where the T-shirts can be displayed.

## Materials

### For the T-shirts

- T-shirts
- Art supplies
- Drying racks

### For the auction

- Copies of auction forms
- Pens
- String to attach pens to forms
- Thumbtacks to attach forms to wall next to each T-shirt display
- Money box with lock
- Receipt book
- Napkins, paper cups, bowl for punch, punch mix, etc.
- Refreshments such as punch and cookies, etc.
- Information on the community organization and the *Onda Sana* program

## Staffing

One to two staff members can coordinate the T-shirt making.

About 10 volunteers to set up T-shirts and forms, and to take down the forms when it is promptly 9 p.m.—or whatever the agreed-upon time is for closing the auction. A staff person from the sponsoring organization will need to collect the money and place it in a lockbox or money box, and someone will need to write receipts for T-shirt purchasers' nondeductible donations.

## Partners and sponsors

For the event to be successful, a team of people must help organize and manage the event. Form a committee of people who are interested in and/or have knowledge and understanding of *El día de los muertos*, HIV and Latinos, such as nonprofit organizations that are youth- and culture-focused and/or focused on HIV issues; cultural arts centers; community theater groups; artists; poets; writers; children's museums; churches; public schools; public libraries; community clinics; and senior citizens' homes. Businesses can donate T-shirts for the auction.

## Items to budget for

Budget items will include materials for the event and T-shirts.

## Location, location, location

The T-shirts can be made at artists' studios or at the community center, school or other place where youth meet.

The auction should take place in an area with many storefronts where the T-shirts can be easily viewed, and where Latinos frequently gather. The activity can be part of the two-day celebration of *El día de los muertos*—toward the end of the celebration on November 2.



## **Setup**

### **For the T-shirt making**

- Tables for creating the T-shirts
- Chairs
- Drying racks

### **For the auction**

- A table for the cashier
- A table for refreshments

## **Starting the activity**

Contact local artists and ask them to work with the youth to create special T-shirts for the auction. The artists should be willing to donate their time and materials for the cause in exchange for their names on the invitations/posters. After the artists have been contacted and they have agreed to donate their services, create a schedule for creating the T-shirts.

## **The auction**

A public announcement can be made three weeks before the event to community centers,

clinics, cultural arts centers and the general public that a silent auction will take place on the evening of November 2. The proceeds from the auction can go to support additional activities for your organization's *Onda Sana* program.

T-shirts can be displayed at storefronts or at a gallery in the vicinity of the storefront displays. The T-shirts will be displayed on the wall with a pencil or pen, as well as a piece of paper with the name of the artist(s), the opening bid, and several lines for the names and phone numbers of bidders. The time at which the last bid will be accepted should be announced—about 9 p.m. or whatever the agreed-upon time is.

Close the auction and remove all the bids from the T-shirts. Announce the highest bidders for each T-shirt. Bidders can pay cash or write a check for the amount of their bid, which should be tax deductible, to the organization hosting the *Onda Sana* program.



## El desfile de Catrina

A *desfile* is a parade or procession, and *Catrina* is a skeleton figure created by Jose Guadalupe Posada (1851–1913) showing the bones of a woman from high society, still wearing an elegant dress, hat and boa. This activity focuses on a *desfile* led by *la Catrina*.

### Objective

The goal of this activity is to celebrate life and make wise choices. The parade or procession can open with an official ceremony and lead to the storefronts, and end with the *teatro* of Dead Dreams.

### Timeline

Preparation of costumes and masks will need to begin at least four weeks before the event on November 2, with the opening activities and ceremonies beginning at about 6 p.m. and the parade starting at 7 p.m.

### Space requirements

An area large enough to host opening ceremonies and a parade (be sure to check on local police regulations on parades, whether permits are needed, etc.).

### Materials

- Platform to be used as a stage
- Chairs for dignitaries
- Podium and microphone
- List of sponsors posted
- List of activities posted
- Posters promoting the event
- Materials to make masks and costumes (see Dead Dreams activity)

### Staffing

20 to 30 people will need to assist with the event organization, setup and cleanup; in addition, someone will need to host the opening ceremonies, and a tech person will need to set up the microphone, etc.



### Setup

- Set up platform to be used as a stage
- Set up podium and microphone
- Make sure the streets are ready for the parade route
- Create and display posters promoting the event
- Arrange chairs for the opening ceremonies

### Partners and sponsors

For the event to be successful, a team must help organize and manage the event. Form a committee of people who are interested in and/or have knowledge and understanding of *El día de los muertos*, HIV and Latinos, such as nonprofit organizations that are youth- and culture-focused and/or focused on HIV issues; cultural arts centers; community theater groups; artists; poets; writers; children's museums; churches; public schools; public libraries; community clinics; and senior citizens' homes. Each organization or group can help to prepare *El desfile de Catrina*. Including people from the media will facilitate



getting the word out about the event.

Including someone from the city council or the mayor's office as a partner and asking for the event to be "city sponsored" may decrease some of the fees associated with having the parade.

### **Location, location, location**

The event should take place in an area with many storefronts where displays can be placed for viewing, and where Latinos frequently gather.

### **Starting the activity**

A public announcement can be made to community centers, clinics, cultural arts centers and the general public that *a desfile* will take place on the evening of November 2 to honor those who have died of AIDS, in hopes that others will make wiser choices about their personal lives by understanding better how to prevent HIV infection.



## Milagros—Hope for the Future

*Onda Sana* emphasizes the importance of planning for the future by choosing to lead a healthy life and decreasing high-risk behaviors. The *milagros* activity is a wonderful way for young people to creatively illustrate their dreams and wishes for the future.

A *milagro* is a physical representation of a wish, hope or dream for the future. *Milagros* have been used for centuries as offerings to ask for wishes, special intervention and good fortune. They have been made from bone, tin, wood, silver, gold and other materials and pinned to the walls of churches. The *milagros* for this activity will be made out of paper and decorated with photographs or drawings.

The *milagros* activity can be used to highlight the importance of planning for the future and valuing life. Parents can use this opportunity to set goals so that their children will see the importance of imagining their place in the future.

Facilitators can use this activity to celebrate the youth in their programs and to help them voice their hopes. This excellent activity can be planned for all celebrations, but it is especially effective in conjunction with *El día de los muertos* and World AIDS Day.

### Objective

The goal of this activity is to celebrate life and make plans and goals for the future that do not include engaging in dangerous activities.

### Timeline

The number of people involved in making the *milagros* dictates the time required to gather materials. If youth involved in the program are the only participants, the materials can be gathered one or two days before the activity. If this is part of the *El día de los muertos* or World AIDS Day events, the facilitator should plan two to three weeks in advance.

If all supplies are to be collected through donations, planning for the activity should begin two months in advance. It will take this long to write and send letters, follow up with telephone calls and collect the materials, but it will take only a day or two to assemble the

supplies if they are being purchased. If a wall is not readily available for the display, a structure will have to be built. This usually takes two days to complete.

Hanging the *milagros* is time-consuming because they must be attached to the exhibit individually. Volunteers should be available for this task.

### Space requirements

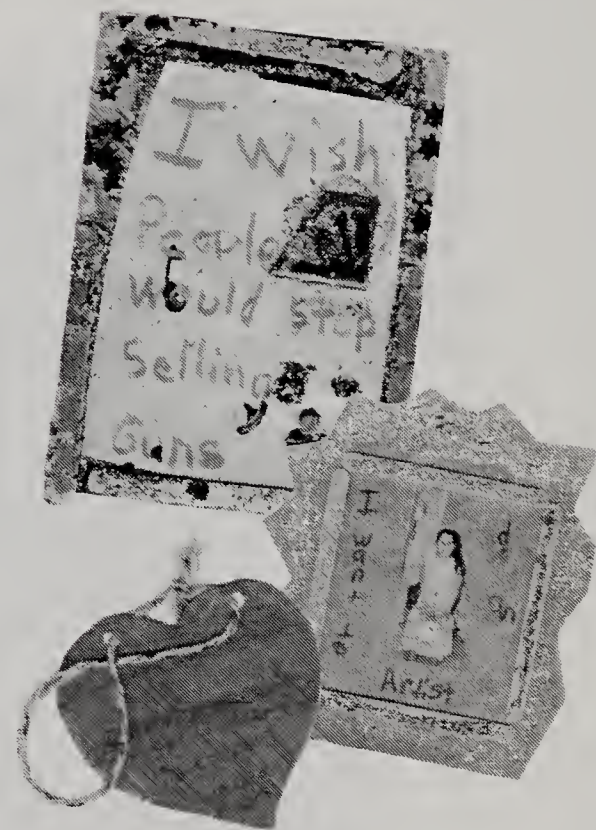
The volunteers will need space to set up the tables for making the *milagros*. There should also be space for bins filled with the supplies (markers, paper, glue, etc.). The workspace should include large tables, chairs and the exhibit space for hanging the *milagros*.

### Materials

- *Milagros*: tagboard or construction paper, scissors, glue, ribbon, markers, crayons, watercolor paints, glitter, buttons, fabric scraps and ribbon
- Exhibit: PVC pipes, store fixture grids or a wall

### Setup

The tables can be set up in a U shape or a circle, with space for volunteers on the inside.





The area should be divided into stations (cutting, writing, decorating, etc.), and signs with simple instructions in Spanish and English should be placed at each station.

### **Partners and sponsors**

There are many sources for free materials to make *milagros*: local arts and crafts stores, grocery stores, office supply stores, print shops, florists, etc. These businesses are often willing to donate items when a nonprofit organization is involved.

If you plan to construct an exhibit, it is important to get help from expert builders such as stage or set designers, artists or carpenters. If the exhibit will be hung in a public place, partners such as a library, mall, government building or park (weather permitting) will be necessary.

### **Items to budget for**

Budget items are dependent on whether this activity is planned as part of a community event or as an in-house project, the number of people expected and how many materials are donated by local businesses. Regardless of the source, you'll need art supplies and materials for the exhibit.

### **Staffing the event**

If this is planned as part of a community event, eight to ten people are required to set up and manage the *milagros* making—and more if a large crowd is expected. Depending on how many tables or workstations are set up, there should be one volunteer per station per hour and a half, plus people to help hang the *milagros*. Volunteers should be bilingual and bicultural.

### **Starting the activity**

Volunteers should discuss the significance of *milagros* and ask the participants to think about their goals for the future. Participants should follow a natural progression in the *milagros* making, from cutting to writing to decorating, and finally hanging them.

### **Steps**

- The *milagros* should be shaped by cutting the tagboard or construction paper.
- Youth should write a goal for the future on one side of the *milagro*. Parents can also make their own *milagros* and write their goals for themselves and their wishes for the future of their children. Very young children and some adults may need assistance.
- Draw a picture on the front of the *milagro*.
- Write the person's first name and age on the back of the *milagro*.
- Make a hole at the top of the *milagro* and tie a piece of string or yarn for hanging. Decorate with glitter, confetti, ribbon, buttons, etc.

### **Displaying the milagros**

Display the *milagros* in a space that is visited by the community, such as city hall, a mall or a library, or a public part of a building such as an entryway or community hall. The exhibit should be very simple.

The *milagros* should be hung from the structure or on the wall with colorful ribbons. To create a dramatic effect, drape three or four wide (c. two-inch) colorful ribbons between clusters (about six strands in each cluster) of curly ribbons. Vary the colors of the ribbons without creating patterns. Hang the *milagros* on the curly ribbons.

The *milagros* can be displayed for a month or more, and others can be encouraged to make *milagros* and take them to the display to be hung.

### **Follow-up**

When the exhibit or event is over, volunteers should catalog the *milagros*. What did the youth say? What did the parents say?

After they have been catalogued, the *milagros* should be sent to NLCI to add the children's voices to the national exhibit.



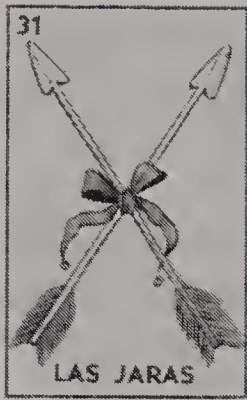
## **Follow-Up Questions for El día de los muertos Events**

Meet with the committee to evaluate the success of the event. Some questions to consider include the following:

- Was the event well attended?
- Was the purpose of the activity met?
- How did the event highlight the issue of making healthy choices?
- Did the young people talk about the issues? How? What was said?
- How many parents/extended family members attended the event? Did the adults talk about the issues? How?
- How did the family members participate in the activities? What feedback, comments or questions did the family members have regarding HIV/AIDS? Did any of the adults ask for follow-up activities, meetings, etc?
- Were the activities well attended before the event? During the event?
- Did the press cover the event?
- Were there any follow-up articles written in the newspaper (after the event)?
- What feedback, if any, did the committee receive?
- Were there enough volunteers?
- What really worked?
- What could be improved?
- What types of follow-up activities are planned as a result of the event?

Record the answers and begin the process of planning the next *El día de los muertos* event.





# 7

## Media Outreach

*Onda Sana* utilizes the cultural strengths of the Latino community as the foundation for HIV/AIDS prevention. The project emphasizes the valuable role youth play in the lives of their families and society. It is important to develop a media plan for every *Onda Sana* event targeting the public. Getting the message out and creating a stir about HIV/AIDS prevention is critical to changing young Latinos' behavior. Since most messages about HIV/AIDS are targeted to the general market, any effort to publicize *Onda Sana* will result in new information to Latinos.

One of the best ways to create a stir about HIV/AIDS is to connect the topic to high media activity days such as *El día de los muertos*, or Day of the Dead. *El día de los muertos* takes place on November 1 and 2 to honor friends and relatives who have died. The celebration has roots in the ancient history of Mexico, long before there was any contact with European cultures. November 1, All Saints Day, and November 2, All Souls Day, are marked throughout Mexico and other Latin American countries by intriguing customs that vary widely according to region.

### Volunteers and committees

A committee of volunteers should be organized before beginning the media work. Include people with a wide range of ideas and skills, plus those who already have a working relationship with the media. Brainstorming sessions with the committee can produce innovative ideas for the media/marketing plan.

#### Committee tasks

- Make clear assignments for each person responsible for part of the plan.



- Designate a spokesperson as the media contact.
- Circulate weekly memos via fax or e-mail to inform committee members of any interviews, events or changes to the schedule.
- Keep minutes from meetings to document assignments and progress.
- Plan a recognition ceremony or luncheon with certificates or mementos to thank the committee after the work is complete.

### Approach the media

The objective of media outreach is to make favorable contacts with the media to advance publicity for *Onda Sana*.

Begin by developing a database of media contacts. This will save time when you're mailing information or letters. In many communities contact lists can be obtained from the public relations division of the convention and visitors bureau. The list can be used to find out



who might be interested in and receptive to the *Onda Sana* project.

### **Newspapers**

Use the local newspaper to target specific readers in the community. Find out who covers youth and children's issues and be prepared to present the story idea. Look through the paper to identify the section most suitable for reporting on *Onda Sana* and contact a reporter who writes for that section. Become familiar with the reporter and his or her subject matter, as well as the style and format—not just how the reporter writes on what he or she reports. Call the reporter and ask for a meeting. It's very important to develop a relationship with the reporter before you make a request for a story, as this is a critical factor in getting the story to press. Meet with the reporter and explain the goals of the project, some of the proposed ideas for the special events and how the issue affects the community. Convince the reporter that covering the issue can benefit readers and will be of interest to them. If possible, the media coordinator should offer himself as an "expert" and offer to assist the reporter on any stories covering familiar topics.

Keep *Onda Sana* alive and timely using a variety of approaches:

- Letters to the editor in response to a printed story on teens and sex
- Op-ed pieces can present two sides of an issue
- A teen column (Ask Lety/Ask Paco) as a way for youth to voice their concerns about HIV/AIDS



### **Television**

Television is one of the fastest ways to get a story out to the community. The steps for creating contacts are the same as for working with the newspapers: identify local news and community programs to contact, and then target specific reporters. Before making the call, be prepared—television reporters work in sound bites, so it's necessary to state the request clearly and concisely. Make sure the media contact is interested or willing to report

on the subject. The simplest way to find out is by asking, "If you're not the appropriate person I should be talking to, could you please direct me to the correct individual?"

### **Pitch the story**

Regardless of whether you're contacting a newspaper or television reporter, keep in mind that journalists always work on deadlines. It's important to ask the reporter if it's a good

time to talk; then describe who, what, when, where, why and how. Be prepared to answer questions. The reporter may then ask for a press release, fact sheet, background and other information.

As a courtesy to the reporter, phone ahead before sending an e-mail or fax. Follow up several times before, during and after the event. It usually takes many phone conversations to get a story covered.

Organizers should remember the lead times for each type of media. Ask about deadlines for the story, and respond in a timely manner. Address all correspondence using the reporter's name, not the generic "publisher" or "editor." Don't assume that the communication has been received. Letters, faxes,



e-mails and voice mails can get lost in a big organization. Follow up to ensure that the most important media contacts have received the information.

Once you've presented the *Onda Sana* event, sent the related materials and made the follow-up call, take the time to call again. Don't assume that the topic will automatically get press time. Ask if the reporter needs additional information. Provide another story angle on the subject to further entice the reporter. For example, if the reporter isn't interested in doing a youth story, ask her to approach it as a health education issue.

If all avenues of communication with a reporter have failed, it's time to move on. Knowing when to move on is important because you'll want to focus your energy elsewhere. Don't worry, though—just because one media contact turns the story down doesn't mean others won't be interested.

The media coordinator should keep accurate, updated files on who was approached, what information was sent and how the information was used, including the names of the reporters, the status of the relationship and, if the information was not used, why. In addition, make tapes of any broadcasts and copies of newspaper or magazine articles.

## **Media methods**

### **Press releases**

Press releases are essential for communicating directly with the media. They are the main vehicle for providing reporters with pre-event information and updates. The press release should include all the information the reporter needs to cover the event. Whenever possible, releases should be printed on an organization's letterhead to lend credence to the information being released. They should always include the contact name of someone who knows everything about the event.

You should feel free to use the sample *Onda Sana* press releases (on disk) for information

or ideas on how to write releases for your own events and community activities. The files are saved as Word documents so that you can access them easily, and edit and cut-and-paste information into your own releases.

The following tips may be useful for writing press releases for *Onda Sana* events.

**Keep it short.** Most press releases are no more than one or two pages. Most reporters don't have time to read anything longer than that.

**Choose one main message.** The release should carry one main message, which is usually a single sentence stated clearly as part of the first paragraph, or lead sentence. All paragraphs should be between one and three sentences long. Use outline form or bullets whenever possible—whatever makes the release quick and easy to read. Try to include at least one relevant, publishable quote in every release.

**Include contact information and a release date.** At the top of the release, be sure to include a date for release and the name and phone number of someone in the workgroup whom the media can call for more information. Bold lettering, all-capital letters or larger font sizes help this information stand out for quick identification.

**Use the inverted pyramid structure.** The easiest method for organizing a press release is an inverted pyramid structure, beginning with specific information and giving progressively more general information in each paragraph. Remember that the purpose of a press release is not to give the entire story of the event in a single page; rather, the goal is to convey the most essential information about the event in the fewest, clearest possible words. The first paragraph should be a statement of the main message of the press release, and the last paragraph should be information about the organization releasing the media advisory—for example, the mission statement, the goals of the organization and a repetition of the contact name and/or phone number.



**Give the basics: Who, what, where, when and why.** Who is organizing the event? Who are some of the main people and groups attending? Who will be speaking at the press conference? What is *Onda Sana*? What kind of activities will take place at the event? Where will it be held? When will the event take place? Why is it important that an *Onda Sana* event is being held? And most important, why is this event newsworthy? All of this information should be worked into every press release sent to the media.

**Ask for confirmation.** At the bottom of the release, ask media to call the contact person to confirm their attendance at the *Onda Sana* press event. During follow-up phone calls, request confirmation from reporters who have not responded. An initial general press release should be sent out at least two weeks before the event. Throughout the following week, updates on speakers, celebrities and other new developments about *Onda Sana* can be sent out. The week before the event, send another release as a reminder to the media. Continue sending updates whenever relevant. Information sent during the final week should be followed up with phone calls to each person in the media database; use these calls as an opportunity to make sure each media contact has received the information and to build a relationship with them.

A final press release, or media advisory, should go out the night before or the morning of the event. It should include a precise schedule; places and times for photo ops and interviews; information on the location of press tables; where to pick up media passes and press kits; and information on event parking.

As soon as possible after the event, follow up with a press release describing the event's success, giving quotes from the press conference and mentioning the availability of photos.

**Ask partner organizations to get the word out.** Ask each partner organization to prepare and distribute a press release in support of *Onda Sana*. The release should be on the organization's letterhead and emphasize the

importance of the *Onda Sana* project to the Latino community. It should include substantive statements about why the organization supports the initiative and outline what action it plans to take on behalf of Latino youth and HIV prevention. It should also include a quote from the president or director of the organization praising and supporting *Onda Sana*. Ask organizations to include their contact information on the release and distribute it to their media constituency. Because you'll want to include these releases in the *Onda Sana* press kit, be sure to request additional copies for the kits. Otherwise, the responsibility for making copies for press kits will fall to media committee members.

### **Public service announcements**

Because broadcast media usually have even less time to cover events than print media, it is necessary to create public service announcements, or PSAs, for local and national radio and television stations. PSAs are usually no more than 30 seconds long, so state only the basics—who, what, when, where and why. (See the sample PSAs on the *Onda Sana* CD-Rom.) In addition to regular press releases, send PSA scripts to the radio stations listed in the committee's media databases. Some local public television stations air text-only "community calendars" on a daily basis. Also, local newspapers have event calendars and city Web sites. Send the broadcast media abbreviated versions of the press releases and ask them to run the PSAs on their station. Television PSAs usually require additional time and work because of the visual elements involved—to say nothing of the money! Begin working with television stations several months in advance to develop appropriate visual footage and dialogue for *Onda Sana* PSAs.

**Be creative.** Find new and unusual ways to get the story noticed, such as using *dichos*. *Dichos* are sayings that express a folk wisdom passed down through the centuries. People use *dichos* in times of need and tribulation or just to teach a lesson to children. They are also



used as guidelines for the development of attitudes, moral values and social behavior.

A PSA using *dichos* and targeted to adults can be a new approach for getting the message to the community about HIV prevention.

Here are a few examples:

- *A quien no habla, Dios no lo oye.* (God doesn't hear those who don't speak up.)
- *Aquel que no oye consejo nunca a viejo llegará.* (He who doesn't listen to advice will never grow old.)

**Other print media**

Billboards, posters in schools and bench ads are a few other ways to get the word out on *Onda Sana*. Check with the National Latino Children's Institute for ideas about some of the messages that can be incorporated for *Onda Sana*.

**Use the wire**

Not everyone creates their own media database to send out press information, although most organizations maintain at least a few contacts of their own. Most large organizations and major corporations use wire services to get their press releases to the media. Wire services can send any press release to a number of specific target media constituencies, including national, regional, state or city media; radio or television stations; and newspapers, magazines and trade publications. Some wire services can also send photos or sound bites over the wire, which media can pick up and use to augment their stories.

Unfortunately, these services are usually expensive, with prices ranging from \$50 (for major local newspapers) to \$500 (for major national newspapers) each time a press release goes out. If an *Onda Sana* partner organization or corporation has an affiliation with a national wire service, ask if they can get a

**A typical plan**

| Media outlet                      | Four weeks before the event                                      | Three weeks before the event                  | Two weeks before the event  | Day before the event  | Day of the event  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Television news media             | Plan appropriate angle for story, call to inquire about interest | Send general press release on the event       | Call to get interest in the event<br>Send more detailed press release | Send press reminder<br>Call to see who is coming                  | Provide press kit<br>Coordinate interview   |
| Spanish language radio talk show  | Send letter with news release regarding event                    | Call to get on the schedule                   | Send additional information about the speaker and the issue           | Air the interview, provide information about the next day's event | Set up on-the-spot interviews with parents and children   |
| English language daily newspaper  | Meet with editorial board to draw attention to the issue         | Develop op-ed column<br>Send press release    | Get people to send letters to the editor responding to column         | Send press release for reporter to cover story                    | Editorial appears regarding the issue   |
| Weekly Spanish language newspaper | Meet with a reporter about the upcoming event                    | Provide Spanish language article on the topic | Announce the event and invite the public to participate               | Send reminder to cover the event                                  | Provide press kit with Spanish press release<br>Arrange for Spanish speakers to be interviewed at event |

Review the plan and be prepared for unexpected changes along the way.

discount or possibly sponsor an *Onda Sana* press release on the wire.

## **Media coverage**

There are three stages to media coverage of an activity: pre-event, on-the-spot event and postevent coverage. Each stage requires different materials and media tactics, and each is critical to ensure maximum media coverage of the event. Additional elements such as photo ops, technical or equipment needs, media access and other special considerations must be taken into account when you're planning the logistics of a press event. The media plan on the previous page outlines each of the essential steps for maximum media coverage of an *Onda Sana* activity.

### **Pre-event coverage**

**Create the media plan.** Organization is the key to planning a successful media plan. To make sure you meet the deadlines at every stage, formulate a detailed schedule outlining each step of the plan.

**Consider the larger goals.** What type and scope of media will the plan target, and when? What kind of information does the press need at each point in the plan? What information and materials are necessary for each type of media to cover the event successfully?

Once the overall goals of the media plan have been outlined, the committee can complete each of the small steps necessary to achieve them.

When you're planning the schedule, keep in mind the time constraints of each type of media and how the nature of the media outlets affect coverage of the event. For example, a monthly magazine may need information and photographs six to eight weeks in advance to include a story about *Onda Sana* in its next issue. A television station can provide instantaneous coverage of the event and may want to do a follow-up story on the local progress of the plan. A national paper may require several press releases spaced several weeks apart, including a media advisory the day before the

event, in order to pique a reporter's interest in covering the event.

Remember that each type of media, depending on its target audience, may take a different slant on *Onda Sana* unless they're provided with the key points of the initiative. Plan which kinds of information and press releases should go to various media sources. For example, a local television station may want more information on Latino youth and HIV/AIDS prevention than a national paper, which might take a broader perspective.

### **On-the-spot event coverage**

**Create a press kit.** To be prepared for a press conference, you should have all the press materials ready for immediate distribution on the morning of the event. Press kit contents should be prepared at least one week in advance (except for late-running press releases, which may be added as they are available). Estimate the number of media representatives who will attend, based on the responses and media confirmations you've received. Be sure to prepare five to ten extra press kits and media badges just in case.

Materials in the *Onda Sana* press kit should include the following:

- A copy of each prepared press release
- A fact sheet on the *Onda Sana* project listing the answers to some of the most commonly asked questions
- A fact sheet with local and national resources with information about HIV/AIDS and young Latinos
- A list of partner organizations for the event
- The name, phone number and e-mail address of the event or project contact person
- Relevant copies of press clippings that provide background information and depth to the subject



**Plan a press conference.** The press conference is the event where live coverage and most interviews are likely to take place—this is the time to shine! You'll need volunteers to assist with preparation for the press conference.

Here are some tips to keep in mind.

- The location of the press conference should be easy to find, with enough space to comfortably accommodate the number of people anticipated, as well as electrical service for microphones and lights. The spot should be as close as possible to the site of the *Onda Sana* activities. If an outdoor location is chosen, be sure to prepare an alternative location nearby in case of bad weather.
- Remember to arrange for a podium, a podium sign and at least two microphones; these should be set up at least 30 minutes before the press conference begins.
- Send the media personal invitations, VIP passes, guest passes and information about reserved seating, and follow up to see that they received these materials. Set up a press table where reporters can sign in and receive badges and press kits.
- The entire press conference should last between 15 and 30 minutes. Try to keep each speaker's time at the microphone to 3 minutes or less. Create a detailed schedule for the speakers with their allotted time clearly marked and the order in which they'll speak. This will help ensure that everyone stays on schedule.



- Check the equipment in advance. Test all the sound and lighting equipment at least 15 minutes before the press conference begins, and arrange to have at least two microphones on the scene in case of a malfunction.
  - Prepare the speakers. Have a short script or talking points for each speaker at the press conference. Include the time and order in which they will speak. Give each speaker their script the day before the conference so they'll have time to become familiar with it.
  - Prepare a press conference binder—a three-ring binder that includes a minute-by-minute schedule for the conference and each speaker's scripted remarks. Label the binder clearly (i.e., "*Onda Sana* Press Conference") and place it in plain view on the podium. Tell the speakers to feel free to refer to it if they wish but to leave it on the podium for the next person.
- This will minimize speakers' stress about talking in front of the cameras and make it easier for them to answer questions and remember key phrases.
- Prepare a podium sign with the name and logo of the sponsoring organization. This will provide a clear image for the cameras and a way to ensure that the audience connects the project and the message with the sponsoring organization.

### **Postevent coverage**

The press conference is over, but the work isn't finished yet! Here are some things you can do to maintain media excitement about *Onda Sana*.



- Send out a follow-up press release describing the success of the event. Include some of the best quotes from the press conference and mention that photos are available upon request.
- Write a press release to create excitement about the national *Onda Sana* initiative, mentioning the success of the local event.
- Call the media who attended the event. Work with their editorial boards to create op-ed articles the following week.
- Watch for press coverage of the event that evening and the next day. Collect clippings from newspapers and magazines, and videotape television coverage. Clipping services are also available for a fee to help collect media coverage of the event. The clippings can be put into a promotional package to send to prospective sponsors for the next event.
- Follow up immediately with those who didn't attend the press conference; deliver a press kit and press release. The fact that a reporter wasn't at the conference does not mean he won't write about the subject. Reporters also appreciate persistence!

## **Tips for effective interviews**

**Be prepared.** Before an interview, set aside a few minutes to think about what you want to say and how you want to say it. Ask a friend or fellow committee member to fire questions at you, and rehearse your answers out loud.

**Use personal stories to show how the issue impacts lives.** Don't just tell reporters why you think your program is a success. Tell stories about specific youth or communities whose lives have been transformed by the *Onda Sana* program. Give concrete examples of how the program works in your community.

**Provide a few facts to support your point.** You don't want to overwhelm reporters with numbers, but it's helpful to have a few key facts and statistics on hand to illustrate the importance of *Onda Sana* and the impact it has on the Latino community.

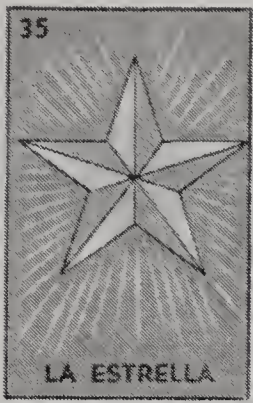
**Articulate your main point.** Make sure you get your main message across clearly. Sometimes you have to say it again and again. Think of it as a variation on a theme: the more times you state your main message, even if it's in a variety of ways, the better people will understand it.

**Don't talk about things you aren't familiar with.** If you don't know the answer to a question, bring the conversation back to something you do know about.

**Relax.** Speak slowly, ask for clarification if you need it and be yourself. The more relaxed you look, the more credible you'll appear.

**Know where to look.** If you're doing an on-camera interview, ask the reporter where he or she wants you to look. Some reporters will want you to look at them, while others will want you to look into the camera. Asking the reporter ahead of time will make this easier for you.





# 8

## Measuring Success

After every event or activity, it is important to evaluate its success and determine whether the goals were met. For example, if the goal of the activity was to provide information to 15 youth about risky behaviors and how to protect themselves from STDs, or to give 25 parents tips for how to talk to their children, a tally should be kept of each person who receives information.

### Before the event

The following are some questions to ask before the event takes place:

- What is the goal of the activity or event?
- What will the youth, or parents or other adults, learn from this activity?
- What behaviors will be changed or skills learned from the activity?
- What processes or events need to take place for learning to occur?
- How can those processes or events be documented?
- How will the changes be measured?

Answering these questions will provide the framework for evaluating the results and measuring the success of every activity.

### After the event

After the event, the following questions should be answered:

- How many parents/youth/families attended?
- If the event was advertised, where did the participants hear about the event?

- Was the site appropriate? Was it easy to get there? Was there enough room for the activity? Were people able to hear the presentation or performance? Were there any distractions that kept people from hearing the message?
- Were the partners and sponsors helpful? Are there other partners and sponsors for next time?
- Was there media coverage? Was an article, an op-ed piece, a calendar item or a letter to the editor published?

It is important to collect data on youth's attitudes about HIV/AIDS, sexuality, and substance use and abuse, as well as their hopes and goals for the future. The results can be graphed across the sessions to observe growth and change. The information gleaned from the evaluation will help ensure that the next time the activity is held, the event will be even more successful.

### Tracking the results

Keep a tally of how many people participate, what activities they enjoyed and/or found particularly useful, and, if possible, the kinds of questions youth asked and comments they made. This information across each occasion can be compared to observe how the participants change.

Understanding youth's and parents' questions and concerns can help in planning *pláticas*, future activities and events, or even articles for the newspaper. Finally, observe if youth's attitudes change as they understand how their choices impact their future and the future of their families and communities. Are youth

reporting that their behavior or understanding about sexuality, HIV/AIDS, STDs, talking with their families, making healthy choices, etc. has changed? What differences are evident?

Coordinators should repeat the evaluation each time an event or activity is held. Compare the results with the previous events to come up with the best formulas in terms of time, place and event.

### **Evaluating knowledge and evaluating events**

Below you'll see three evaluations; feel free to tailor them—adding questions or reorganizing them depending on the needs of your organization and the community it serves—as you wish. Each evaluation is also included on the *Onda Sana* CD-ROM so that you can easily revise and print copies for your organization.

1. **So What Do You Think?** Use this true/false evaluation to assess the knowledge of youth and their parents about HIV/AIDS and how it is contracted. You might use it during a *plática* or during one of the activities, or after an event as a starting point for a discussion on the nuts and bolts about HIV/AIDS.
2. **HIV/AIDS Awareness Survey.** Use this survey as a way to gather information about what your participants—be they youth or their families—know about HIV/AIDS.
3. **User Questionnaire.** We want to know what you think about *Onda Sana* so that we can continue to improve it. Please take a few moments to fill out the user questionnaire and to give us candid feedback about how it worked for your organization.





## So What Do You Think?

Please answer these questions while thinking about your own experiences.

All answers are true or false. Place a T or F in the space provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ My partner just got tested for HIV/AIDS and the test was negative. We do not need to use a condom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I only do drugs with my best friends, so I don't have to worry about sharing needles, because I've known my friends all my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can't tell a person is infected just by looking at him/her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Only "bad" people get HIV/AIDS.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can get infected the very first time you have sexual intercourse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My partner and I are in love and are committed to each other. There is no need to use condoms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can get infected if you do other stuff like oral or anal sex.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It doesn't matter if I do get infected because there will be a cure very soon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There aren't any adults that I can go and talk to about HIV/AIDS and sex.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I can do anything that I want to today, because it won't affect me when I get older.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I don't lose control over myself when I drink or if I try drugs, so I'm not in any danger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No one cares about me, so it doesn't matter what I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My family doesn't talk about these things, so it must not be something I need to know about.



## HIV/AIDS Awareness Survey

Thank you for giving us valuable information by carefully filling out this form. Please answer the following questions as best you can. Mark only one answer.

1. Can HIV/AIDS be spread by insects such as mosquitoes? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
2. Can HIV/AIDS be transmitted by saliva or kissing? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
3. Do only homosexuals or drug addicts get HIV/AIDS? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
4. Can you get HIV/AIDS by using a needle or syringe someone else has used? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
5. Is a blood test the only way to find out if you are infected with HIV? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
6. Can the use of a condom help to protect you from getting infected with HIV? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
7. Is it safer to be in a relationship where both partners are having sex only with each other? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
8. Can you get HIV/AIDS from a dirty toilet seat? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
9. Do many people have HIV without knowing it? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
10. Can a pregnant woman infect her baby with HIV before it is born? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
11. If a person has an STD (such as herpes, gonorrhea, genital warts, chlamydia, etc.), are they at higher risk of getting infected with HIV? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
12. Can birth control methods other than condoms protect you from getting infected with HIV? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
13. Should children with AIDS be allowed to attend school? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
14. Can AIDS be cured if treated early? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
15. Is AIDS a punishment from God? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
16. Is not having sex one way of reducing the risk of AIDS? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
17. Do you know enough to protect yourself from AIDS? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
18. If you felt you were at risk for infection with HIV, would you change your behavior? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
19. What do you consider your risk of infection with HIV? Low ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ High

### About you

☐ Female ☐ Male Age \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Non-Hispanic ☐ Hispanic

Where do you live? City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Circle number of years of education completed (i.e., 12 years if you completed twelfth grade, 16 years if you completed college)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

What languages do you speak/understand? \_\_\_\_\_





## Encuesta sobre el VIH y el SIDA

Al completar esta encuesta usted no sólo nos brinda su apoyo sino que también nos ayuda aportándonos información de mucho valor. Considere sus respuestas cuidadosamente y marque la respuesta que más se aproxima a su opinión.

- |   |  |                             |                                |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. ¿Es posible contraer el VIH o SIDA por medio de una picadura, como de mosquito o mosca?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 2. ¿Se transmite el VIH o SIDA por medio de un beso o la saliva de una persona contagiada?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 3. Las únicas personas que contraen el VIH o SIDA son los homosexuales o drogadictos (toxicómanos).   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 4. ¿Puede uno infectarse con el VIH o SIDA si comparte agujas o jeringas con otros?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 5. ¿Es cierto que la única manera de averiguar si está o no infectado con el VIH es por medio de una prueba sanguínea?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 6. Los condones ayudan prevenir la transmisión del VIH.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 7. ¿Es más seguro estar en una relación en que ambos únicamente hacen el sexo con su pareja?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 8. Si una persona se sienta en un inodoro sucio ¿podría contraer el VIH o SIDA?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 9. ¿Hay muchos, que sin darse cuenta, ya tienen el VIH?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 10. ¿Puede una mujer embarazada transmitirle el VIH a su bebé antes de que nazca?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 11. Si alguien padece de una ETS (enfermedad de transmisión sexual- como verrugas genitales, herpes, gonorrea, clamidia, etc.), ¿corren un riesgo mayor de contraer el VIH? | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 12. Aparte de los preservativos, ¿existe algún otro tipo de anticonceptivo que ayuda prevenir la infección con el VIH?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 13. ¿Se debería permitir que los niños que padecen del SIDA asistan a la escuela?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 14. Si se detecta y trata temprano, ¿tiene el SIDA cura?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 15. El SIDA es un castigo mandado por Dios.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 16. Una de las formas de evitar el SIDA es no tener relaciones sexuales.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 17. ¿Cree que sabe suficiente como para protegerse del SIDA?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 18. Si creyese que las probabilidades de contagiarse con el VIH son altas, ¿cambiaría su forma de ser o estilo de vida?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sí  | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé |
| 19. ¿Cuáles son las probabilidades de que usted se contagie con el VIH?   | baja <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> alta |                             |                                |

### Cuéntenos, ¿quién es usted?

☐ mujer    ☐ hombre    edad \_\_\_\_\_    ☐ no es de ascendencia hispana    ☐ de ascendencia hispana

¿En dónde vive?    ciudad \_\_\_\_\_    estado \_\_\_\_\_

¿Cuántos años de estudios académicos ha completado? (por ejemplo, marque el 6 si completó la primaria, el 12 si completó los 12 años de primaria y secundaria, el 16 si completó los 4 años de estudios universitarios, etc.)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

¿Qué idiomas domina? ¿Cuáles entiende? \_\_\_\_\_



## User Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in the *Onda Sana* project. Please take a few moments to let us know how the materials worked for you and what we can do to improve them. Thank you for your help and feedback!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

(Use another sheet if necessary)

### **Onda Sana coordinator's handbook**

Overall, what are your thoughts about the handbook?

What did you like best about the handbook?

What could be improved? What should be added?

What activities did you do? Were the instructions in the handbook clear?



Did you find the handbook easy to use? Why or why not?

**Escoje tu destino**

What did you like best about the youth notebook, *Escoje tu destino*?

How did youth use the notebook?

What other resources and information would youth find helpful?

How would you improve *Escoje tu destino*?

What comments, if any, have you received about *Escoje tu destino* from youth, parents or others in the community?

**Onda Sana press materials**

What did you like best about the press materials?

What could be improved? What should be added?

**Onda Sana CD-Rom**

Was the *Onda Sana* CD-Rom useful?

Was it easy to access and use the materials on the CD-Rom? If not, please elaborate.

What additional materials, if any, would you like to see on the CD-Rom?

Anything else?

**Thank you for your time. Please mail or fax this form to NLCI.**

National Latino Children's Institute  
1325 N. Flores Street, Suite 114  
San Antonio, Texas 78212  
Fax (210) 228-9972





# 2

## Resources

In this chapter, you'll find a list of Web sites and national hotlines that can provide information on topics ranging from sexuality to HIV/AIDS, to how to talk to your parents or how to talk to your child, to poetry slams and *El día de los muertos*, to *corridos* and *calaveras*.

In addition, a fact sheet on Latinos and HIV/AIDS offers statistical information—much of it based on data gathered in the 2000 U.S. Census—about how HIV/AIDS is affecting the Latino community.

Both of these documents—the list of resources and the fact sheet—are included on the CD-Rom for easy printing and distribution.

### Web sites and hotlines

#### For teens

##### National Latino Children's Institute

[www.nlci.org](http://www.nlci.org)

An information resource on the healthy development and well-being of young Latinos focusing on health, safety, literacy, early childhood education and other areas. Has sections on creating *una ona sana*—a healthy wave for the future.

##### Coalition for Positive Sexuality

[www.positive.org](http://www.positive.org)

A grassroots, nonprofit organization that provides teens with candid sex education materials in English and Spanish. Information about sexuality, birth control, pregnancy, safe behaviors and STDs; a forum for teens to “talk” via e-mail about sex; and resident experts who can answer questions by e-mail.

##### Di Que Sí!

[www.positive.org/DiQueSi/index.html](http://www.positive.org/DiQueSi/index.html)

Comprehensive information from the Coalition for Positive Sexuality Web site in Spanish.

##### Teenwire

[www.teenwire.com](http://www.teenwire.com)

Sexuality and sexual health for teens, sponsored by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

##### Teen Advice Online

[www.teenadvice.org](http://www.teenadvice.org)

Provides support for a wide range of teenage problems through a network of peers ages 13 and up.

##### Girls Incorporated

[www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org)

National youth organization dedicated to helping girls become smart, strong and bold through advocacy, research and education. Resources, activities, news and networks for girls around the country.

##### Iwannaknow

[www.iwannaknow.org](http://www.iwannaknow.org)

A safe, fun place for teenagers to learn about STDs and their sexual health. Sponsored by the American Social Health Association.

##### The Body

[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)

An AIDS and HIV information resource for teens and parents. Includes information in English and Spanish.

##### Outproud

[www.outproud.org](http://www.outproud.org)

A wide range of resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth, including information on local organizations, online brochures, peer educators online and materials for families and schools.

##### Go Ask Alice!

[www.goaskalice.columbia.edu](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu)

A question-and-answer service for teens looking for information about sexuality, health, nutrition, substance abuse and positive choices. Links, chat rooms and weekly surveys.



## **For parents and teens**

### **Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States**

**[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)**

A national nonprofit organization that develops, collects and disseminates information, and promotes comprehensive education about sexuality. Excellent site with separate sections for youth and their parents with information and resources for making responsible sexual choices, as well as tips for taking care of yourself and talking to your family. Comprehensive bibliographies on a variety of health, sexuality and education topics.

### **Can We Talk?**

**[www.canwetalk.org](http://www.canwetalk.org)**

This community program is designed to help parents talk with their children about healthy relationships and sexuality, including the prevention of pregnancy, HIV/STDs, drug abuse and violence. Sponsored by the National Education Association Health Information Network.

### **National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy**

**[www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)**

Strives to improve the well-being of children, youth and families by reducing teen pregnancy one-third between 1996 and 2005. Good information for parents and youth—and lots of tips on how to talk about sex and sexuality—in both English and Spanish.

## **Statistics, reports and resources on Latinos and HIV/AIDS**

### **Latino Commission on AIDS**

**[www.latinoaids.org](http://www.latinoaids.org)**

This New York-based, nonprofit membership organization is dedicated to improving and expanding AIDS prevention, research, treatment and other services in the Latino community through organizing, education, program support and training.

### **Centers for Disease Control**

**[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)**

The federal clearinghouse for vast stores of information, statistical and otherwise, on

HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and how populations around the country are affected by them.

### **Centers for Disease Control en Español**

**[www.cdc.gov/Spanish](http://www.cdc.gov/Spanish)**

The CDC's Spanish-language site; tailored to Latino populations—not just a translation from English. Provides information about a variety of health topics from asthma to diabetes to HIV/AIDS.

### **The Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative**

**[www.omhrc.gov/omh/aids/aidshome\\_new.htm](http://www.omhrc.gov/omh/aids/aidshome_new.htm)**

Includes information about prevention of the disease, living with HIV/AIDS and links and statistics. The Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative is sponsored by the Office of Minority Health.

### **National Minority AIDS Council**

**[www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org)**

Working to develop leadership in communities of color to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Links to local organizations around the country and other information.

### **Kaiser Family Foundation HIV/AIDS site**

**[www.kff.org/sections.cgi?section=hivaids](http://www.kff.org/sections.cgi?section=hivaids)**

Includes the Kaiser Family Foundation's archived reports and findings, including information about family and youth attitudes about HIV/AIDS and sexuality. Detailed reports focusing on youth and sexuality, Latino attitudes about HIV/AIDS and many other health topics.

### **National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization**

**[www.llego.org](http://www.llego.org)**

LLEGO addresses issues of concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Latinos at local, state, regional, national and international levels, and works to create a forum of awareness and understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Latina/o identities, legal rights, relationships and roles in the Latino community.

### **National Council of La Raza**

**[www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)**

NCLR, which works to improve life opportunities for Latinos, has several programs focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention. *Charlas Entre Nosotros* provides a peer-to-peer HIV/STD prevention program for Latino youth; the Latina HIV Needs Assessment Project collects informa-



tion from Latinas on the effectiveness of media messages and HIV prevention programs targeting them; and the Sharing Success Project strives to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS related to substance abuse and mental health among Latino youth.

**Farmworker Justice Fund, Inc.**

**[www.fwjjustice.org](http://www.fwjjustice.org)**

The Farmworker Justice Fund, which strives to improve the living and working conditions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, has a “train-the-trainer project” designed to help farmworkers and their families become *promotores de salud*—health promoters that spread the HIV/AIDS prevention message in the farmworker community.

**Office of the U.S. Surgeon General**

**[www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov)**

General information and reports about Americans, sexuality and public health.

**Center for Health Policy Development, Inc.**

**[www.chpdonline.org](http://www.chpdonline.org)**

CHPD provides a forum for Latino service providers, administrators, representatives of public health departments and researchers, along with community representatives, to come together with other colleagues to address serious threats to the health and *bienestar* (well-being) of Latino families and communities.

**National Latina Health Network**

**[www.nationallatinahealthnetwork.com](http://www.nationallatinahealthnetwork.com)**

NLHN develops networks of Latina leaders in public health and builds community health partnerships that enhance the quality of life for Latinas and their families. Its Teatro AIDS Prevention Project combines traditional Latino theater with peer education to prevent HIV infection among youth ages 16 to 24. Another program, AHORA, uses a family-centered approach to reduce homophobia and the stigma of HIV and sexuality in the Latino community.

**Advocates for Youth**

**[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)**

Provides information, training and strategic assistance to youth—serving organizations, policymakers, youth activists and the media to help young people make informed, responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.

**American Red Cross**

**[www.redcross.org/services/hss/hiv aids](http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/hiv aids)**

The American Red Cross’s bilingual HIV/AIDS program, Fundamentals, includes updated statistics on Latinos and HIV/AIDS, information about Latino cultures and innovative educational tools; it has family-oriented materials and special features for youth.

**UCSD Antiviral Research Center**

**[www.avrctrails.org](http://www.avrctrails.org)**

Sponsored by the University of California at San Diego, the Youth HIV Program provides a full range of bilingual services to youth ages 12 to 24 who are at risk of or living with HIV. Services are provided by youth-friendly staff in a clinic designed by and for youth. For more information, visit the Web site or contact Mauricio A. Pérez, youth programs specialist, UCSD Youth HIV Program, (619) 543-8080 ext. 242.

## **Celebrations and culture**

**[www.azcentral.com/rep/dead](http://www.azcentral.com/rep/dead)**

Information about the El día de los muertos history, food, traditions, papel picado and altars, with a focus on central Arizona.

**[www.mexconnect.com/mex\\_/feature/daydeadindex.html](http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/feature/daydeadindex.html)**

Photos and information about how *El día de los muertos* is celebrated in Mexico.

**[www.sat.lib.tx.us/html/DeadDay/day-ofthedead.htm](http://www.sat.lib.tx.us/html/DeadDay/day-ofthedead.htm)**

History of *El día de los muertos*, recipe for sugar skulls and *pan de muerto*, *papel picado*, *ofrendas*, poetry, etc., sponsored by the San Antonio Public Library.

**[www.utexas.edu/admin/opa/discovery/disc2000v15n3/disc\\_tejano.html](http://www.utexas.edu/admin/opa/discovery/disc2000v15n3/disc_tejano.html)**

A history of the southwestern corrido; site sponsored by the University of Texas at Austin’s Discovery series, focusing on the research of faculty.

**[www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/CC/lhc1.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/CC/lhc1.html)**

An in-depth discussion of the *corrido*’s history and development in Mexico and the United States.

## **Poetry, poetry slams, writing by and for youth**

### **Youth Speaks**

**[www.youthspeaks.org](http://www.youthspeaks.org)**

Youth poetry organization based in New York and San Francisco that brings young people together across community, school and neighborhood lines through the written and spoken word.

### **Upwords Poetry**

**[www.upwordspoetry.com](http://www.upwordspoetry.com)**

The site is a resource for young writers and artists around the world who are interested in the written and spoken word. Includes links to other writing and art sites for youth.

### **Poetic License**

**[www.itvs.org/poeticlicense](http://www.itvs.org/poeticlicense)**

Documentary and curriculum on youth poetry. Includes a section where youth can submit their work to be posted online in audio, video or text format.

### **Xenith.net**

**[www.xenith.net](http://www.xenith.net)**

Xenith was started in 1997 by a 16-year-old who wanted to see what other people her age were writing and give them a place to showcase their work. Today the site has a devoted following of young writers from across the globe and has published hundreds of works of poetry, fiction, essays, plays, rants and more.

### **Nuyorican Poetry Café**

**[www.nuyorican.org](http://www.nuyorican.org)**

Web site for the Nuyorican Poetry Café, "27 years of spoken word, theater, poetry, slam, hip hop, live music, and film" from New York City's Lower East Side. The café provides a stage for poets, writers, thespians, performance artists, musicians and visual artists not only from the Caribbean and the Americas, but from all over the world.

### **E-Poets Network**

**[www.e-poets.net](http://www.e-poets.net)**

Includes information and downloadable files of poets' works, as well as a history of the poetry slam movement.

### **Poetry Slam Incorporated**

**[www.poetryslam.com](http://www.poetryslam.com)**

The official national (adult) poetry slam site.

## **National hotlines**

### **Domestic Violence Hotline**

(800) 799-SAFE

24 hours a day

### **Emergency Contraception Hotline**

(800) 584-9911

24 hours a day

### **HIV/AIDS Teen Hotline**

(800) 440-TEEN, ext. 29

Friday and Saturday, 6 p.m. to midnight, EST

### **National AIDS Hotline**

(800) 342-AIDS (English)

(800) 344-7432 (Spanish)

Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., EST

### **National Child Abuse Hotline**

(800) 4-A-CHILD

24 hours a day

### **National Gay and Lesbian Hotline**

(888) 843-4564

Monday through Friday, 4 p.m. to midnight;  
Saturday, noon to 5 p.m., EST

### **National STD Hotline**

(800) 227-8922

24 hours a day



## **Just the Facts: Young Latinos and HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS affects everyone—regardless of lifestyle, income, education, or region. Latinos in every category are affected by the disease at higher rates than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. What makes this trend more alarming is the possibility that Latinos are not getting the message about the dangers of HIV/AIDS; there's a dearth of information on the subject and few educational materials targeted to the Latino community.

Statistical information can give a partial picture of how the disease affects Latinos. The data below are based on information provided on these Web sites:

- Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))
- Kaiser Family Foundation ([www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org))
- Office of the U.S. Surgeon General ([www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov))
- The Body: An AIDS and HIV Information Resource ([www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com))

### **Latino youth**

Although Latino youth have a higher rate of HIV/AIDS infection than their counterparts in the non-Hispanic white community, there is little statistical information about them. Because a clear understanding of the way HIV/AIDS affects this population is critical to developing policies and programs that will reach them, NLCI recommends that states and organizations take a harder look at this issue.

- Although Latino children make up only 12 percent of the U.S. population under age 13, they represent 24 percent of all pediatric AIDS cases.
- Although Latinos make up only about 15 percent of U.S. teenagers, they represent 20 percent of AIDS cases among teens.
- 20,000 youth ages 13 to 24 are infected with HIV every year. Based on this number—and the fact that Latino teens represent 20 percent of teen AIDS cases—we can estimate that approximately 4,000 Latino youth are infected with HIV a year.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), at least half of all new HIV cases occur in young people under age 25.
- As of June 2000, approximately 11,000 Latino youth ages 24 and under had been reported with AIDS, according to the CDC.
- The CDC reports the following AIDS cases in Latino boys through June 2000:
  - 766 youth ages 5 and under
  - 280 youth ages 5 to 12
  - 501 youth ages 13 to 19
  - 4,178 youth ages 20 to 24.
- The CDC reports the following AIDS cases in Latino girls through June 2000:
  - 758 youth ages 5 and under
  - 212 youth ages 5 to 12
  - 274 youth ages 13 to 19
  - 1,486 youth ages 20 to 24.

- The CDC reports that, through June 2000, 1,200 Latino youth under the age of 15 (626 males, 574 females) had died of AIDS.
- 1,807 Latino youth ages 15 to 24 (1,329 males, 478 females) had died of AIDS as of June 2000.
- Findings from a 1998 study showed that Latino teens who talked with their mothers about condoms before their first sexual intercourse were three times more likely to use condoms than those teens who did not talk to their mothers. Furthermore, condom use at first intercourse was associated with a 20-fold increase in lifetime condom use.
- Although Latinos make up only 13 percent of the population, they account for just over 20 percent of perinatally acquired AIDS cases.
- As of June 2000, the CDC reports that 741 Latinos under age 13 contracted AIDS through injection drug use; 491 contracted the AIDS through sex with a injection drug user; and 256 contracted it through sex with an HIV-infected partner.

## **All youth**

- In a recent survey, 87 percent of young Americans said they do not believe they are at risk for HIV infection.
- Public health officials estimate that each day, between 27 and 54 Americans under age 20 are infected with HIV; youth between the ages of 13 and 24 are contracting HIV at a rate of 2 people per hour.
- By 12th grade, 65 percent of American youth are sexually active, and 1 in 5 has had four or more sexual encounters. Each year, 3 million adolescents contract STDs, a rate of 1 in 4 sexually experienced teens. And of the 12 million Americans with STDs, about two-thirds are under age 25. These statistics indicate that many adolescents are engaged in unprotected sex, which places them at risk of HIV infection.
- In 1999, 1,813 young people ages 13 to 24 were reported with AIDS, bringing the cumulative total to 29,629 cases of AIDS in this age group.
- Among young men ages 13 to 24, 50 percent of AIDS cases reported in 1999 were among men who have sex with men; 8 percent were among injection drug users; and 8 percent were among young men infected heterosexually.
- In 1999, among young women ages 13 to 24, 47 percent of all AIDS cases reported were acquired heterosexually and 11 percent were acquired through injection drug use.
- The CDC estimates that the percentage of adolescent AIDS cases among U.S. female teens rose from 14 percent in 1987 to 49 percent of all adolescent cases in 1997.
- Surveillance data gathered between January 1996 and June 1999 indicate that youth ages 13 to 24 accounted for a much greater proportion of HIV (13 percent) than AIDS cases (3 percent). These data also show that even though AIDS incidence is declining, there has not been a comparable decline in the number of newly diagnosed HIV cases among youth.
- Scientists believe that cases of HIV infection diagnosed among 13- to 24-year-olds are indicative of overall trends in HIV incidence because this age group has more recently initiated high-risk behaviors.
- In the United States, knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is low, even though teens exhibit greater knowledge than adults, according to a study conducted by the



American Social Health Association. In one poll, only 12 percent of American teens and 4 percent of adults were aware that STDs infect as many as one-fifth of the people in the country, and 26 percent of adults and 42 percent of teens could not name an STD other than HIV/AIDS.

## **Latino parents**

- 70 percent of Latino parents are very concerned about their children getting HIV (compared to 52 percent of all parents), according to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 1997 national study.
- 70 percent of Latino parents want more information about what to discuss with children about HIV and AIDS, compared with 46 percent of the general public.
- 95 percent of Latino parents believe the federal government should spend money on HIV and AIDS education and other prevention efforts.
- 63 percent say they need information about where to go for help if exposed to HIV.
- 58 percent say they want more information about HIV testing.
- 41 percent would like information about the proper way to use condoms, compared to 13 percent of the general public.
- When asked which single area they wanted information about, their first choices were discussing AIDS with children (40 percent) and finding information about where to go for help if exposed to HIV (17 percent).

## **Latinos**

- As of June 2000, more than 137,575 Latinos in the United States were diagnosed with AIDS.
- While Latinos make up less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 20 percent of the total number of new U.S. AIDS cases reported in 1999 (9,021 of 46,400 cases).
- Cumulatively, males account for the largest proportion (81 percent) of AIDS cases reported among Latinos in the United States, although the proportion of cases among women is rising.
- Women represent 19 percent of cumulative AIDS cases among Hispanics, but they account for 22 percent of cases reported in 1999 alone.
- According to the CDC, the AIDS incidence rate per 100,000 population (the number of new cases of a disease that occur during a specific time period) among Latinos in 1999 was 25.6, almost 3 times the rate for non-Hispanic whites (7.6) but lower than the rate for African Americans (66.0).
- According to the CDC, HIV risk among Latinos varies depending on level of region, acculturation, lifestyle, and birthplace. A high rate of HIV/AIDS exists among Latinos in the Northeast, and lower rates occur in the West and Southwest.
- 57 percent of Latinos reported with AIDS in 1999 were born in the United States; of those, 43 percent were born in Puerto Rico.
- Higher incidence of HIV in the Northeast among Puerto Ricans may be related to higher use of injection drugs; Puerto Rican Latinos have the highest prevalence of drug use, in part due to the fact that most (70 percent) living in the United States reside in New York City, New Jersey, and Chicago, where rates of poverty are higher and the availability of illegal drugs is higher than in other parts of the country.

- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 1997 national survey, 9 in 10 Latinos say AIDS is a major threat to public health in the United States; 2 in 3 Latinos says AIDS is a more urgent problem for the country than it was a few years ago.
- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 1997 national study, 70 percent of Latinas say AIDS is a very serious problem for someone they know, compared with 64 percent of Latino men and 35 percent of women overall.
- The Kaiser Family Foundation found that 46 percent of Latinos are very concerned about getting HIV (compared with 24 percent of the general population), and 41 percent say their concern about infection has grown in recent years.
- 69 percent of Latinos in the Kaiser Family Foundation's study said they had never talked with a health care provider about any aspect of HIV or AIDS; 24 percent have talked specifically with a health care provider about the risks of being infected with HIV, and 19 percent have discussed getting tested.

### **Latinos and the media**

- 71 percent of Latinos say that major television networks should accept advertising from condom manufacturers for broadcast, compared to 62 percent of the general population.
- 59 percent of Latinos favor more condom references in movies and shows that deal with sexual relationships.
- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 1997 national study, Latinos say television is their number one source of HIV/AIDS information; 70 percent say they got information about AIDS in the last month from television news programs.
- 42 percent of Latinos say they got information from radio talk or call-in shows in the last month.

### **The general population**

- 774,467 AIDS cases, nearly two-thirds of which were sexually transmitted, have been reported since 1981.
- An estimated 800,000 to 900,000 persons are living with HIV in the United States.
- An estimated one-third of those living with HIV are aware of their status and are in treatment, one-third are aware but not in treatment, and one-third have not been tested and are not aware.
- An estimated 40,000 new HIV infections occur each year.
- In 1998, HIV was the fifth-leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.



## NLCI's research findings

Throughout the four years of NLCI's research, almost 200 items surfaced as possible barriers to success for young Latinos. Individually, the barriers can be overcome, but the combination of multiple challenges makes it difficult for many young Latinos to achieve their dreams. Four recurring themes capture the essence of the issues facing today's Latino youth:

- Identity
- Healthy communities
- Institutional challenges and opportunities
- Looking to the future

These recurring themes serve as the framework for *Onda Sana*, and the strategies, products and training take into account the unique circumstances of young Latinos and their culture.

### Identity

Among the most prominent issues identified by youth and adults was the complexity of living in two cultures and speaking two languages. Whereas most participants viewed this as a strength, the overwhelming majority (50 to 1) felt that the general population does not value the diversity or language capacity that Latinos contribute.

The conflict was especially noticeable in light of the need for continued development of global interaction. Parents shared their frustration with teaching their children English to help them succeed in school, only to discover that their children became disconnected from their families, who frequently spoke only Spanish. Youth who were not in bilingual education programs were angry and disappointed that their first language was not valued in elementary school—especially given the fact that, years later, they were required to have credits in a foreign language to graduate from high school.

Another significant issue youth and adults identified was the negative portrayal of Latinos in English-language media. According to a 1999 study by Children Now, Latinos are the most underrepresented group in English-language television and film. Young Latino actors described their difficulty securing roles that did not reinforce negative stereotypes.

Parents and teachers talked about the difficulty of finding children's storybooks reflecting the Hispanic experience. They described the insensitivity they encountered at public libraries when they requested that more books about Latinos be added to the collections. Authors described their negative experiences with publishers and identified the few companies that were making efforts to publish Latino authors and books about the Latino experience.

Youth struggled with the need to find role models in their communities. Although many identified family members and local heroes as models, the group felt that Latinos were not sufficiently recognized in the marketplace. There was consensus that Latinos were almost invisible in museums, history books, and other archival sources.

### Healthy communities

Children are more likely to grow up healthy and successful when their communities are safe and healthy. Communities must also offer families support services ranging from libraries to schools, child care, summer jobs for youth, community service centers, and parks and play spaces. Most participants felt that the Latino community is frequently isolated from the well-developed parts of their cities; a large percentage of Latinos live in poor communities where basic services are sometimes unavailable.

Along the Texas-Mexico border, half a million people—the majority of them Latino children—live in underdeveloped *colonias* that may not have running water, sewer services or paved roads. In urban areas, crowded situations result from unaffordable housing. Violence is all too frequent in neighborhoods that are isolated from the mainstream.

Access to health care is another major concern. Latino children are the most uninsured group in the nation. Despite Latinos' high rate of participation in the workforce, many hold jobs that do not provide benefits for families. In addition, because many parents work round-the-clock in canneries, factories and service industries such as restaurants and hotels, the need for extended clinic service hours is great. Because few clinics are open at night, many people, especially those without health insurance, may be forced to get help at emergency rooms at a much higher cost.

### **Institutional challenges and opportunities**

A recent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment has spread across the country, engulfing anyone whose language or culture is outside the mainstream. Ironically, most Hispanics are U.S. citizens, some as a result of the United States taking over the region where their Spanish ancestors lived more than a century ago. These areas, including California, Texas, Florida, New Mexico, Arizona and the territory of Puerto Rico, continue to have bonds with Mexico and other Central and South American countries that are part of their residents' history, family legacy and everyday life.

The challenges youth face are systemic. They permeate all major people-serving institutions. Barriers can include entrance criteria for higher education institutions, the public school finance system, culturally incompatible professional preparation programs, lack of transportation, school testing, scarce or unavailable health care, and few opportunities for scholarships and grants. Combined with cultural and linguistic differences, the challenges become difficult to overcome.

### **Looking to the future**

Technology is the newest avenue to information. Students with access to the latest technology can acquire a broader base of knowledge than those without access. Many Latinos live in marginalized communities with few libraries, math and science programs or research centers.

Latino youth are often tracked into vocational education programs that concentrate on simple carpentry, auto mechanics or cosmetology, even if the students have high grades and other aspirations. Students described how difficult it was to avoid being tracked if their parents could not help them choose the right courses. This was most evident for students whose parents did not graduate from high school.

Students asked for leadership skills to advocate on their own behalf. They wanted to learn how to move within the power structures of their communities and schools to change policies that exclude them. Most youth believe they can make their communities better places for their younger siblings and for their own children. They insisted that to be valued, their voices must be heard by the adults who make decisions for them.

Building healthy communities for Latino children requires a vast marshaling of resources. Helping youth develop healthy self-regard and identity while facing difficult challenges requires public attention, commitment, and the assets of Latino communities, their families and Latino youth themselves on a scale that has not been undertaken until now.

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Portions of this section were adapted from *The Agenda in Action*, a 1999 report by the National Latino Children's Institute. For more information about the report, contact NLCI at (210) 228-9997 or visit NLCI's Web site at [www.nlci.org](http://www.nlci.org).









# National Latino Children's Agenda

## Preamble

We, the family of the Latino Children's Agenda, acknowledge and understand that Latinos are an integral part of this country's past, present, and future; the Latino population has contributed significantly to this country's development and will continue to do so; children are the center and the most precious aspect of Latino families and communities.

It is to our children that we presently and historically devote our lives. The children are interconnected with their ancestors, extended family, and community. In advocating for Latino children, we are also indirectly advocating for the dignity, respect, and fair treatment of all children. We stand united in the effort to assure the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being of those we represent: the children.

## Guiding Principles

- ⊗ Children will be treated with dignity and respect.
- ⊗ Children will live in loving and healthy homes.
- ⊗ Children will live in a secure, safe, and healthy community.
- ⊗ Children will have the right to achieve their highest potential.
- ⊗ Children have the right to see themselves positively and accurately reflected in literature, music, film, media, and other forms of artistic expression.
- ⊗ Children will have a voice and a role in the development of their programs and services.
- ⊗ Programs and policies will respect the integrity of the family and the unique extended family relationships in Latino families.
- ⊗ Families will be included in decision-making about the creation and implementation of their children's programs.
- ⊗ Agencies and service providers will be culturally and linguistically competent to work in the Latino community.
- ⊗ Professional preparation programs for all types of work will include language and culturally appropriate competencies.
- ⊗ Comprehensive services will be fully accessible to all children, including those whose parents are migrants, work nontraditional hours, or are not citizens.
- ⊗ The community will reflect and support the values and ideals of Latino families.
- ⊗ The community will provide resources that help strengthen and support families.
- ⊗ Latino children will have equal access to quality education from early childhood programs to higher education.
- ⊗ The unique circumstances of Latino families—including family structure, economic status, culture, and language—will be incorporated into programs and services.
- ⊗ Bilingual education programs will be available to children who speak languages other than English.
- ⊗ Developmentally appropriate early childhood care and education programs will be available to all children.
- ⊗ The language, culture, and spirituality of Latino families will be respected as an integral and necessary part of children's identity and development.
- ⊗ Latinos will participate in policy and funding decisions in the private and public sectors.
- ⊗ Latinos will participate in developing new self-sufficiency and economic opportunities for their communities.

September 1994



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